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SWINBURNE'S HYPERION  
AND OTHER POEMS  
WITH AN ESSAY ON  
SWINBURNE AND KEATS

---

not ethics, but with the fiery speed all rent  
Shrieks round upon that sharp jag-toothed head  
The father of the cloud concealed broad. 20  
There pulsers, rabbles, bears with teeth & nails  
The solid ground to creep & hide, & his head  
Even in the very heart of pain & fight,  
So sorely shallid remembrance me, him  
Of that dire evening on Ithomæ's height 25  
Where mid the lowering glooms of hanging rocks  
He couched, to scoff the secret of heaven,  
And Bacchus flinging thro' the many dance  
With torches glared & loose curl'd wreath'd earth  
But him swift vengeance sent & the blind hand<sup>wreath</sup>,  
Of evil gave & the hidden glade  
Dew'd with his showering blood & entrails torn.  
All these & more, the blurring livid air  
Of that unmeasur'd cave in earth's dim womb  
Half shawd, half by concealment over made, 35  
A hideous thing <sup>between</sup> loo'd from afar.  
Here wait'd the giants, hidden & abred,  
Not wholly creell'd before that morn fell—  
More dreadful, as from height more glorious when

SWINBURNE'S  
HYPERION

AND OTHER POEMS

---

WITH AN ESSAY ON  
SWINBURNE AND KEATS

By

Georges Lafourcade

L O N D O N

Faber & Gwyer



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D E D I C A T I O N

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TO THOMAS JAMES WISE



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## PREFACE

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## PREFACE

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THE chief purpose of this volume is to edit some hitherto unpublished poems by Swinburne; it would have been easy and tempting to include more, Swinburne's juvenile fecundity being only equalled by Mr. Wise's unfailing kindness. But I had no intention to print the whole of Swinburne's early poems or even a representative selection from these; this volume purports to have a deeper, if more restricted, unity than would have thus been obtained.

This unity is to be found in the longer of these poems which I have, for convenience' sake, entitled *Swinburne's Hyperion*; it is here printed for the first time as a remarkable instance of Swinburne's imitative powers as applied to a well-defined model at an early period of his life.<sup>1</sup> I have added a few other pieces which pointed, though less directly, to an influence of the same model.

My initiative will, I know, be open from the first to an objection striking at its very root: is one justified in printing a manuscript which Swinburne left unfinished and unpublished? Is the value of the poem such that, from the purely literary point of view, it warrants publication in a somewhat elaborate and scholarly form? Of all answers, the best is, perhaps, that this objection was first raised by myself to myself, and that I did not launch on what will, I am aware, be considered by some as a rash enterprise, without due meditation on the subject. And my choice,

<sup>1</sup> This volume affords a very striking illustration of some of the pages in my *Jeunesse de Swinburne, II L'Oeuvre. Préparation et Imitation : Préface, etc.*

## P R E F A C E

though deliberate, was absolutely free from any considerations of advantage or opportunity.

It seems difficult to answer the criticism that the poem has no originality, therefore no merit, because it is professedly a pastiche; the argument is weighty, and yet so easy to wield! But it would be a great mistake to consider *Swinburne's Hyperion* independently as a poem and pass sentence upon it as such. It would be a mistake from the artistic point of view. For the fragment would then strike us as altogether unintelligible. I here use the adjective in its fuller sense: not only the characters and situations would seem confused and far-fetched, but also the gems of the style, the beauties of the inspiration would remain unaccounted for, perhaps unperceived:

'She ended fearless; but no less a death  
Of stony silence spelled the Olympian crew;  
As some worn voyager from shores remote,  
Where the calm sun sleeps on the western verge  
Of utmost sea, slumbering with level rays  
Where in the summer sunset ever dream  
His woodland race, landing on some lone beach  
Thro' tropic shades of giant verdure wide  
And alleys deep with huge magnolia archt,  
Odorous, long wanders thro' the perfum'd eve,  
Till in the dewy dusk a city gleams,  
Her humbler towers and bastioned walls in night,  
But on her topmost pinnacles the sun  
Sits, turrets that flame back his western rays  
From towering gold and domes of diamond-glare;  
With hope amaz'd the inlaid gates he passes

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Wide gaping to the twilight landskip dim;  
Palace on palace, dome on shining dome,  
Rises and arches o'er the dusky streets  
With bridges of gold and stately statues wrought,  
And many a pile of grey magnificence  
O'er the broad silent ways, curiously wrought;  
Cornice and buttress, pillars and architrave;  
All stony silent as the sleeping times,  
Unstirred by human breath; he gazes maz'd,  
Till him too the cold petrifying night  
Clasps and he stands mute in those dusky streets,  
A statue among statues, wrought to life;  
Nor ever voice breaks the silence of death.  
No less dead-silent stood the throng amaz'd,  
And Fear first trembled thro' the deep of heaven.'

The above passage, beautiful and dignified though it may sound, has no *sense*, hence no poetry, if one does not connect it both with Keats's description of Hyperion's Palace and with some of the lines in the first two Books of *Paradise Lost*. To overlook the intellectual element which can never be absent from true poetry is a mistake; to do so in a poem whose inspiration, being imitative, is chiefly intellectual, is a sin—a sin against the very rules of Art. No poem can be judged until it has been accepted by the intellect; it may then, of course, be rejected for a multitude of reasons; but not till then should Swinburne's attempt be in fairness rejected even by the most captious critic.

Milton's and Keats's styles are in their finest form admirable, because they are both the logical outcome of a series of experiments and evolutions and because they correspond

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intimately to an inspiration without which they could scarcely exist. Speeches in the style of Satan's grandest periods would, in a poem like *Epipsychedion*, seem almost intolerably burlesque; how distressing would Keatsian cadences sound in Morris's rendering of *Beowulf!* Swinburne's *Hyperion* considered independently as an 'original' poem is neither good nor bad, nor remarkable nor worthless; it is simply unintelligible. ↗

But when loyally compared with two great acknowledged models it strikes me as a fine artistic achievement. It makes one's bosom glow to come across such lines as

'The joyous balminess of starry dews  
That pearl the wan face of maternal night'

or:

'Unfolding slow his universal lore'

or:

'He spoke and calm amid the breathless hush  
Grey Saturn rising spake with dreamy looks  
Where dim Philosophy slept vision'd faint'

or:

'And many a pile of grey magnificence'

or:

'So having said back to his cloudy dreams  
Musing he dropt, and ceasing husht the air  
That trembled yet melodiously and full  
With the calm awful music of his words'

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in spite or rather because of the fact that they beautifully echo Keats's cadences. The remarkable thing is that while reproducing so perfectly an alien style, Swinburne had already developed (in the *Ode to Mazzini* and the *Temple of Janus*) a style which was well his own; and that after having thus mastered Keats's manner, he could afford to shake it off so completely in some of his later masterpieces. The Miltonic lines produced by Swinburne are no less felicitous and exhibit, perhaps, more sustained power and dignity. Such are:

'and they [the Titans] lay low in silence pale,  
Shadows amid a shadowy world, until  
Slow heaving his broad bulk, unbent as yet  
With weight of stars incumbent, Atlas rose  
Painfully, unlike the rapid joyous strength  
That mov'd him glorying thro' the exultant heavens. . . .'

and:

'He spake threatening, and scorn his proud lip curv'd  
Kinglike: yet scarce they whisper'd scar'd applause.  
But queenly Pallas with unruffled look,  
As when in Academic groves she met  
• Deep-thoughted Plato, or the reverend head  
Of Socrates, or likest when she chid  
The wrath of war-vest Mars at Ilion, spake  
With slow melodious voice.'

and:

'Leapt all the impious into sudden joy;  
Free of this galling yoke and festering pain,

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They triumphed and in new delight of strength  
And satisfied desire of torturous days,  
Exulted, running, springing blithe and light  
With tread elastic and new freedom quafft  
Delightful, such the joy of pain releast!  
Long, long the wither'd throat of Tantalus  
With fiery drought inflam'd the waters cold  
Of icy Lethe bathed with pleasant draught  
Sweeter than Bacchus' bubbling purple e'er  
To wearied reveller, nor brought his soul  
Sane pain's oblivion.'

But the pastiche goes further and becomes properly creative rather than imitative when Swinburne actually combines the Keatsian and the Miltonic styles. This is illustrated to a point by passages like:

'He spoke; and calm with quiet lips, and eyes  
Scornful of pain or blind contention,  
Sank back the grey god-sophist of the sea,  
With serene look of wisdom satisfied,  
Serene and mute in godlike changelessness.  
But Cœus, rising like a shatter'd rock  
With swift and fierce contempt and eyes that gleam'd  
Red light and hideous thro' the livid air,  
Sprang up and shouted, with loud voice and hoarse.'

or:

'Rise, rise, and seize again your ancient rule!  
Or would ye die, and in the blind night swathed  
Lie cold in senseless immortality,  
Not by annihilation wholly crush'd

P R E F A C E

But dying, as far as gods can die? now choose,  
Fallen powers, for no other choice is left.'

Lastly, the swelling impulse of the genius that was in Swinburne could not, for all its marvellous docility, be continually curbed and bridled at will. When—as is the case sometimes—it half-consciously breaks loose from its self-imposed restraint we catch fine glimpses of a fourth manner of style, bright yet muscular, often strongly alliterative and now perfectly original,—the style of the Swinburne that was to be; witness the lines:

'One anguish by another recompenc't.'

and:

'As winds that wrestle with the storm-chafed sea . . .  
On some lone shore clouded by screaming mews . . .'

and:

'In the red bolted thunder roars and rends  
This circulating power of self-born life,  
And smiles along the smooth, unfurrowed deep,  
Shrieks down the whirlwind, mutters in the storm  
. Grows with the growth of sunny-bosomed woods . . .'

and:

' . . . thrust by this vast hand of that  
Which men call Time or Fate or Chance or God.'

and:

'He ended, and a sudden clangour yell'd  
From all the host, harsh braying, as the roar

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Of charging trumpets on the battle's verge  
When shrieks the air with shafts, and clashes round  
With clarions . . .'

and:

'Thy hand is strong with sceptre; men on earth  
Mount up to thee their prayers in steaming clouds  
Of incense, and the reek of slaughter'd herds . . .'<sup>1</sup>

and:

' . . . swung behind  
Hell's gates revolv'd with hideous clangour clos'd.'

All these passages and many others are artistically a success; one quality they have in common: music and rhythm united with that dignity, that stateliness, and that kind of self-confidence which constitute the grand style. I hold that they add something to the plentiful store of English literature. But of course they lose all value and significance if one fails to consider them in the light of previous or later masterpieces. Imitation of this kind has its place in literature as well as in painting or sculpture. Swinburne's attempt is a homage paid to Keats's masterpiece, a proof of the greatness and vitality of the poem, and as such is worthy of attention and preservation; but it is something more than that. *Hyperion* and *Paradise Lost* were little more to

<sup>1</sup> Compare with:

' . . . they wail and cry, they rage and rend,  
Shed blood with prayer for sacrifice, and make  
Day foul with fumes of fires unnatural whence  
Hell risen on earth reeks heaven-ward . . .'

(*Marino Faliero*, Act V, Scene II.)

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Swinburne than the beautiful models of his friend D. G. Rossetti. Photographs of Mrs. Herbert and Lizzy Siddal and Jane Burden, could not lessen our delight in *Found* and *Beata Beatrix* and *Day Dream*. I would not press too far what must prove an inadequate parallel; but *Swinburne's Hyperion* ought, I think, to have a humble niche beside *Paradise Lost* and Keats's *Vision*. For, while it could not exist without them, it is something different from them, and when its glittering ornaments, be they tinsels or mirrors or small gems, are set alight by their purer and stronger fire, it flames and blazes like a minor masterpiece, it appears and seems and is something very beautiful.

I have so far considered the poem exclusively from the artistic point of view. But the intellectual interest attaching to an attempt of this kind—an attempt in which Milton and Keats are the models and Swinburne the imitator—is well-nigh inexhaustible.

An introduction had therefore to be supplied in order to give *Swinburne's Hyperion* its full value and significance; this I have done as thoroughly as I could, but always from the point of view of the poem which I had undertaken to edit. I was thus led to describe and study the fragment itself, and also to follow up throughout the whole of Swinburne's poetry the development of an influence which was so clearly foreshadowed at a very early stage. But I had previously to examine Swinburne's critical attitude to Keats in order to be better able to understand the attitude of Swinburne the poet.

For this, the first part of my study, I should perhaps feel emboldened to claim some originality. I have not attempted to give an analytical summary of Swinburne's utterances on Keats; I have not collected and ordered these

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according to a logical and exhaustive plan; for this would, to my mind, have given an entirely wrong impression. We may or we may not regret the occurrence, but Swinburne certainly did not write a thesis on Keats; and certainly we are not expected to write it for him.

I have, therefore, tried to follow the development in his mind of some ideas and sentiments connected with the work and personality of Keats; these evolved, although they did not change, and were in some cases modified by the knowledge of new facts. These modifications I have endeavoured to record without interfering with the chronological order; what will be found in the first pages of my essay aims at being an intellectual biography of Swinburne with reference to Keats's works and personality.

I might, with excellent reasons, have chosen for this study another influence than that of Keats; Shelley would have seemed to supply a clearer and more characteristic instance, and the editing of the unpublished *Temple of Janus*, which I discovered among the manuscripts of the British Museum, would have been a tempting task. But if, from the point of view of diction, metres and inspiration, that study might have yielded a richer harvest, Swinburne's critical attitude to a personality like Shelley's would have been of much less interest and importance. It is in contrast with an absolutely different nature that some of the most subtle features of Swinburne's genius can be elucidated; it will be seen that with reference to Swinburne's moral and intellectual attitudes the parallel with Keats has served us in very good stead.

I have, of course, been fortunate in the case I chose; while Swinburne was on the whole hostile to Keats's influence,

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I have been able to prove that he had attempted a deliberate imitation, and that the results of this early experiment were not altogether obliterated in the years that followed. But I suggest that in many other cases a study of one great writer's reaction to the works and personality of another, conducted on the same lines of intellectual biography and possible literary influence, might yield important and unexpected results. If I have not been entirely mistaken I could claim no higher praise for my otherwise unambitious study.

I have, before I conclude, to fulfil the pleasant duty of offering my most sincere thanks and acknowledgments to Sir Edmund Gosse for his frequent help and advice; to Professor Denis Saurat and Professor René Galland for much useful information on some particular questions; to Mr. G. C. Faber and Mr. Thomas Earle Welby; and above all to Mr. T. J. Wise who has kindly allowed me to choose freely among the treasures of his collection the poems which I wanted to edit, and who has never refused the help of his rare bibliographical science and rarer bibliographical instinct.

*Institut Français du Royaume Uni, 1927.*



SWINBURNE AND KEATS:  
AN ESSAY

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## SWINBURNE AND KEATS: AN ESSAY

---

A PECULIAR interest attaches to the relation between Swinburne and Keats. Critics have failed to detect any deep influence of the works of the latter poet on those of the younger; indeed, while the names of Shelley, Landor, Hugo, Arnold, Tennyson and Browning occur once and again in all accounts of Swinburne's literary formation, Keats has scarcely ever been mentioned. Yet Swinburne expressed throughout his life a feeling of unfailing, if qualified, admiration for the genius of the author of *Hyperion*. One should at the same time remember that Keats was, with hardly an exception, the supreme idol of the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren.) Their admiration for him has often been recorded and studied.<sup>1</sup> But the position taken by the chief poet of the group has hitherto failed to attract attention. The following study aims, with the help of some unpublished documents, at throwing new light on Swinburne's general attitude to Keats.

### I.—KEATS AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

---

NO reference to Keats is to be found in the early letters of Swinburne. This is all the more remarkable as comments on the works of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Browning, etc., are frequent.<sup>2</sup> Swinburne's friends and

<sup>1</sup> Léonie Villard: *Influence of Keats on Tennyson and Rossetti*, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Swinburne had read Keats's poems in 1851–2; I owe this valuable information to the kindness of Sir George Young who was Swinburne's friend and schoolfellow at Eton.

associates were all—the fact cannot be too strongly emphasized—devoted admirers of Keats. The Pre-Raphaelite painters hailed him as a pioneer, and showed a keen appreciation for the sensuous element in his poetry.<sup>1</sup> To D. G. Rossetti, Keats was 'the true heir of Shakespeare' and some of his works were the 'final achievement of English poetry'. The peculiar character of his admiration is clearly illustrated by some unpublished letters which were privately printed in 1919 by Mr. T. J. Wise. He writes of *The Eve of St. Mark*:

'Keats's unfinished poem on that subject is perhaps with *La Belle Dame sans Merci* the chapest and choicest example of his maturing poems and shows astonishingly real mediævalism for one not bred an artist' (1880).

It is evident that it was the painter in Rossetti who responded above all to the appeal of Keats's poetry; this is further illustrated by his sonnet *John Keats*, and by the following saying quoted by Lady Burne Jones: 'The next Keats ought to be a painter'.<sup>2</sup> W. Morris spoke of Keats as of one 'for whom I have such boundless admiration'.

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth mentioning that a great many Pre-Raphaelite pictures were inspired by Keats's poems: G. F. Watts began by quoting some lines of Keats to his *Echo*; next Holman Hunt painted his *Eve of Saint Agnes* (1847-8); D. G. Rossetti, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* (1848); Millais his *Isabella and Lorenzo* (1849), etc. Further instances could be derived from the following pictures: *Hyperion, Lorenzo and Isabella, Isabella and the Pot of Basil* (W. H. Hunt); *Diana and Endymion* (G. F. Watts), etc., etc.

But Swinburne met Rossetti when he was no longer connected with these painters, and it was only through him that the great Keatsian fervour of the early Pre-Raphaelite days could reach the poet.

<sup>2</sup> See the comments of Melle Villard, *op. cit.*

tion and whom I venture to call one of my masters'. His was, however, a fastidious taste, for

'Milton he abused, Wordsworth he disliked, he had little admiration for the later works of Browning, and did not care for Tennyson after *Maud*. But Keats was the first of modern English poets.'<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Lady Burne Jones writes that Keats was one of the chief subjects of her husband's talks, and that Ruskin delighted in reading his poems aloud to him.<sup>2</sup> If Spenser is often referred to as the 'poets' poet' it seems that Keats might with good reason be described as the 'painters' poet'.<sup>3</sup>

Nor was this all. A casual look at the Bibliography shows us that most of Keats's editors and critics during the 'sixties and the 'seventies were men of Pre-Raphaelite sympathies and personal friends of Swinburne. Monckton Milnes it was, who, after publishing Keats's letters and

<sup>1</sup> MacKail, *Life of W. Morris*.

<sup>2</sup> George Meredith, as Professor Galland has kindly pointed out to me, was no heretic on this important article of the Pre-Raphaelite dogma: he once recited (1862) the *Ode to a Nightingale* to Hardman. Keats's influence is clearly felt in some of his early poems (*To a Nightingale*, *Daphne*) (1851), which have some typical epithets ('mellowing', 'drowsy', 'odorous', etc.). His poetry of nature forms, I think, what is in the whole of English literature most akin to Keats's greater achievements in this particular field (see also *The Spirit of Keats*, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> D. W. Rannie in his excellent essay on Keats's epithets remarks that 'they are distinctly the epithets of an artist of the type to which painters and sculptors belong. If for the moment we choose to divide poets into three classes, those who paint (or carve), those who sing, and those who prophesy, we must unhesitatingly place Keats in the first class.' We should with as little hesitation assign to Swinburne a place among the prophets.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

literary remains in 1848, first revealed to the world in 1856 what he thought to be an early version of *Hyperion*. Prefaces and introductions to no less than five<sup>1</sup> successive editions of Keats's poems, testify to his life-long interest in one whom he styled 'the Marcellus of the Empire of English Song'. W. M. Rossetti and W. B. Scott were also responsible for several editions, and the latter records how he 'wrote verses to Keats in the teeth of his Professors at Edinburgh University'. Watts-Dunton mentions in a depressing Foreword to the 1914 edition of Keats's Papers that 'he began to be steeped in Keats at the age of 14'.<sup>2</sup> Last, but not least, John Nichol, who was the chief influence on Swinburne at Oxford, is known to have also been an admirer of Keats.<sup>3</sup>

But Swinburne keeps aloof for some considerable time, and when he speaks at last his voice rings strange and cold in this grand chorus of praise.

## II.—SWINBURNE ON KEATS

---

### A. KEATS AND THÉOPHILE (1862)—INTENDED ESSAY ON KEATS (1866)

**S**WINBURNE'S first reference to Keats is to be found in his Essay on Théophile, composed *circa* 1862 and privately printed in 1915. The essay has this arresting

<sup>1</sup> 1848, 1854, 1863, 1871, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> and quotes from one of his own 'sonnets' on Keats; the whole preface is as perfect an instance of 'puff oblique' as Sheridan could have wished.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of John Nichol*, by W. A. Knight.

sentence in which the whole of the poet's later critical attitude to Keats is already indicated:

'There is something like Keats in the breadth and frankness of this [Théophile's] general enjoyment and susceptible vivacity of sense; but there is a clearer air of health *which Keats has not*: a greater poet is visible in his letters *and a sicklier man.*' [The italics are mine.]

We shall refrain from any further comment on this sentence; its high significance will be recognized later; let it meanwhile serve as an epigraph to this part of my Introduction.

At the beginning of the year 1866, Swinburne, who after long and strenuous *débuts* in the literary field, had achieved sudden prominence through the unexpected success of *Atalanta* and the more clearly anticipated notoriety of *Chastelard*, was entrusted by his publisher Payne (who was acting as agent for the firm of Moxon & Co.) with the editing and prefacing of a volume of selections from Byron in the series known as 'Moxon's Miniature Poets'. While still engaged on this task the poet seems to have received from Payne another offer for a book of selections from Keats; to this he refers in a most important and still unpublished letter to W. M. Rossetti, dated January, 1866, from which Mr. Wise has given me permission to quote:

'Now I am going to ask for your help and advice in a matter of business regarding only my own interest. I have made for this Miniature series of Moxon's a book of selections from Byron, with a critical essay prefixed which has cost me some time and trouble. It will appear on the first of next month; and to-day Payne writes to ask what

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he is to pay into my banker's hands on this account. What do you think I ought to say? An illustrious Scotch person of the name of Buchanan has done, it seems, a like office for Keats, and received £10 in return. This sum the publisher is willing to lose, and to cancel the poor devil's work, if I will do Keats instead on those terms; and won't I? and wouldn't I gratis? This forthcoming Scotch edition of Keats, who hated the Scotch as much as I do (Scotus I consider Northumbrian by adoption and Scotch no longer) has long been a thorn in my side; and apart from the delight of trampling on a Scotch poetaster, I shall greatly enjoy bringing out a perfect edition of Keats with all his good verses and none of his bad. But all this does not help me to see what under the circumstances I ought in justice to demand for the Byron, a work less delightful and more laborious.'

This extract is most interesting as it illustrates both Swinburne's eagerness to undertake an edition of Keats's poems, and his instinctive dislike of R. Buchanan who had not as yet attacked him in any way. (*The Session of Poets* was not published in the *Spectator*—with the pseudonym of Caliban—until September 15, 1866.) But, as D. G. Rossetti, who knew him well, experienced

'The smell of the skunk  
Led the shuddering nose to Buchanan'.

And Swinburne's nose was particularly tender where 'game' of that kind was concerned.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is also interesting to note that W. M. Rossetti fully shared Swinburne's instinctive antipathy for the 'Bard Buchanan'. In his answer to the letter above quoted he remarked:

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The next reference occurs in a letter of March, 1866, addressed to Lady Trevelyan: Swinburne, having now finished his preface to Moxon's *Miniature Byron*,<sup>1</sup> is, as we know, preparing to write a similar preface on Keats. But nothing came of this scheme; Swinburne wrote instead an introduction to Coleridge in 1869 and his utterance on Keats was withheld for the time being.<sup>2</sup>

### B. KEATS'S LIMITATIONS: MATTHEW ARNOLD'S 'NEW POEMS' (1867)

But in the following year (1867) Swinburne found means in a review of Matthew Arnold's *New Poems*<sup>3</sup> at once to express and define the nature of his admiration for Keats. When reading the passage which I am going to quote one should, of course, note the high praise which it is meant to convey; that Swinburne admired Keats was already known from the *Essay on William Blake* (composed 1862-5) in

'I confess a peculiar abhorrence of Buchanan, and satisfaction that his Caledonian fæces are not to bedaub the corpse of Keats . . .'

This answer (in Mr. Wise's collection) is also unpublished. (See *A Swinburne Library*, p. 45.)

<sup>1</sup> In this article, published in 1866, Swinburne has some very interesting pages on the treatment of Nature by the great romantic poets; he remarks casually that 'Coleridge and Keats used nature mainly as a stimulant or a sedative' as against Shelley and Byron whose passion in the great things of nature was 'perfect and ravenous'. This implied criticism of Keats for his purely æsthetical attitude should not pass unnoticed.

<sup>2</sup> But Swinburne—unknown to the publisher—had a hand in the edition of Keats's poetical works undertaken by W. M. Rossetti for Moxon in 1870 (see below). And after all he *did* Keats for Moxon.

<sup>3</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1867.

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which 'a man so perfect as Keats' is contrasted with 'a man so imperfect as Burns'.

But one should not overlook the fact that all this admiration, unbounded though it may seem, is clearly limited to a certain sphere, above which it cannot rise, precisely as Keats's genius was unable to rise above it. In fact we had already been warned in *Notes on Poems and Reviews* (1866) that 'No one would lift Keats on a level with Shakespeare. But the Fates have allowed us to possess at once Othello and Hyperion, Theseüs and Hermaphroditus.' It seems, therefore, that Keats stands in the same relation to Shakespeare as the statue of Hermaphroditus to the earlier masterpieces of Greek art.) And, as Swinburne takes great care to explain, 'No one would compare it with the greatest works of Greek sculpture'. Nor is this attitude at all inconsistent, if one carefully weighs the full meaning of each sentence, with this burning page of praise in which Keats is exalted above Maurice de Guérin:

'In Keats there was *something* of the spirit and breath of the world, of the divine life of things; in Guérin there was hardly a soft breathless pulse of fluttering sympathy; here was the *anima mundi*, made flesh once more in the body of a divine interpreter such as all great poets must be *after their kind*; there was the *animula vagula blandula*, of a tentative, sensitive, impressible nature. But Keats, of all men, born the ablest to hold his own with nature and translate her gods into verbal incarnation; Keats who was at once the lyrist and the lyre of that nature, the priest and the altar of those gods; more than all other poets receptive and passive of her influences and forces, and more than all

other poets able and active to turn them all to a divine use, to transfigure them without transformation, to attune all colours and attemper all harmonies; whose power upon these things, whose gift of *transfusion* and expression places him *apart from all* in sovereign command of nature, able to do for nature what in his own day Shelley could not achieve nor Wordsworth attempt; above all Greece and all Italy and all England *in his own line and field of work*; to push forward as a competitor with him *in that especial field of work* where all the giants and all the gods of art would fail to stand against him for an hour, a man who *in his own craft* could not use the tools that lay ready to his hand—who was nothing it seems if not a poet, and could not as much as prove himself a poet by writing passable verse at all; this is a madness of mistake explicable and excusable only as the error of a foreign and provincial judgment.' (M. Arnold's *New Poems*—reprinted in *Essays and Studies*.)

This is one of the best pages of prose Swinburne ever wrote. And it is also excellent criticism; for Swinburne here defends French poetry against the strictures of Arnold, and never indeed was Arnold more completely and effectively snubbed. And this is, of course, glorious and very intelligent praise. But if one is not wholly carried away by the galloping rhythm of the prose, one will notice a series of short incidental sentences or expressions which all tend to the same restricting effect. I have italicized the most characteristic of these: *after their kind*, *in his own field of work*, *in his own craft*, etc. The fact of the matter is that Swinburne felt and acknowledged Keats's perfection, but that this very perfection was for him the sign and symbol of

a certain limitation in the scope and nature of his inspiration. Keats was supreme, but in his own sphere; and Arnold's mistake is not so much that he compares a genius like Keats with a second-rate writer like de Guérin, but that he chooses one who shows no grasp or mastery over his material, who 'cannot use his tools', to set against one who is the most accomplished craftsman the world has ever seen. And this, Keats will always remain in Swinburne's eyes: a wonderful word-painter, but more of an artist than of a poet. This is clearly illustrated, in the above passage, by the reference to the gods and giants. All students of Swinburne are acquainted with the poet's classification. It is an important principle which is often referred to in Swinburne's critical works, but is nowhere so clearly expressed as in the opening lines of his *Essay on A Century of English Poetry* (1880).

'Poets, I have sometimes thought, may not improperly be divided, though doubtless by no mutually exclusive division, into two classes, definable by designations borrowed from ancient mythology; the Giants and the Gods. Gods indeed there are among them of gigantic stature, and giants of godlike quality—godlike in grace and gentleness, as those others Titanic in port and power: but though the distinction may not always be equally easy to define, it can never in any case be really difficult to recognize. From the days of Shakespeare and Jonson to the days of Shelley and Byron, the difference between the two confronted and contrasted races is in the main perceptible and patent . . .'

The same theory is outlined in the *Essay on Coleridge* (1869), in which it is asserted that 'the ranks of great men

are properly divisible, not into thinkers and workers, but into Titans and Olympians'; in the *Note on Charlotte Brontë* (1877) and in the *Essay on Middleton* (1887). A brief classification of the main English poets is often attempted on those lines: Jonson, Byron are giants; Shelley and Coleridge stand among the Gods; Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Hugo are both. But Keats is not even named; the classification does not hold good with him; he is supreme, in the very words of Swinburne, 'in that especial field of work where all the giants and all the gods of art would fail to stand against him for an hour'. Being neither a giant nor a god nor both, was Keats at all a poet according to the Swinburnian standard? The question is well worth raising, although doubtless Swinburne would have answered in the affirmative out of sheer poetic instinct. But the fact remains that nothing is more foreign to Swinburne's art than the art of Keats, with its purely sensuous and æsthetical achievements, depending neither upon sweeping rhythmical effects, nor on contrasts in violent mental attitudes. Strange though it may seem to some, I venture to suggest that Swinburne would have condemned Keats's poetry on grounds of moral and intellectual inadequacy.

#### C. PARALLEL WITH SHELLEY: KEATS'S MENTAL INFERIORITY:

(NOTES ON THE TEXT OF SHELLEY—1869)  
*Swinburne's Selection from Keats (W. M. Rossetti's Edition of Keats's Poetical Works—1870)*

This view receives further support from a passage in the *Notes on the Text of Shelley* which were published in 1869.

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A parallel between Keats and Shelley is outlined, and we are told that the latter's

'mark is burnt in more deeply and more durably upon men's minds than that of any among the great poets of his day. Of these Coleridge and Keats get no such mark on the spirit of their readers; they left simple and perfect examples of work absolutely faultless, visibly unsurpassable, self-resumed and self-content.'

There can, I think, be little doubt that Shelley, in direct contrast with Keats, was the poet after Swinburne's heart;<sup>1</sup> and in the same essay the critic, confuting Arnold, goes so far as to set Shelley against Keats even in the latter's own province, the field where 'he is unapproachable' and may 'bid all kings of song come bow to his throne'—i.e. description of nature—Keats 'practically alien to all things but

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne has definitely stated that he ranked Keats below Shelley as a poet of nature:

'there is much sober and sedate enjoyment of nature . . . in the poetry of Wordsworth; there is a . . . singular intensity, a matchless refinement of relish for the pure delight of communion with natural beauty perceptible in the poetry of Keats: but to neither was it given, to rise beyond these regions of contemplation and sensation into that other where the emotion of Keats and the emotion of Wordsworth become one, and are superseded by a greater . . . At the sound of the Ode to the West Wind . . . the nightingale of Keats's garden falls silent in our ears. The poet who wrote that and the poet who wrote Christabel—but these alone of their generation—are indeed to be counted among the very chiefest glories of English poetry; and it is surely no inadequate reward . . . to stand where Wordsworth stands—but a little lower than these' (*Wordsworth and Byron*, published 1884).

art' <sup>1</sup> is thus dwarfed by Shelley's Titanic size and lost in his intellectual shadow.

In the storm that broke out in August, 1866, about the still unpublished volume of *Poems and Ballads*, all the literary schemes which Swinburne had undertaken for the firm of Moxon came to grief: Payne became to him a thing abominable and a gentleman could no more think of having to do with him than an English Republican of raising his hat to Napoleon III. Among these schemes was, as has been said before, an intended volume of *Selections from Keats* with a critical introduction. This introduction Swinburne never wrote, but the question of selecting Keats's best poems was again unexpectedly raised when at the beginning of 1870 one of Swinburne's closest friends, William Michael Rossetti, was entrusted by Payne with the editing of Keats's *Poetical Works*. This was no longer to be a volume of selections, but Moxon & Co. hinted that only a majority of the poems were to be reprinted; W. M. Rossetti immediately wrote to Swinburne, consulting him as to the choice and also inquiring whether some unprinted verses by Keats might not be available from the hands of the poet's friend, Lord Houghton. Swinburne answered very fully in a hitherto unpublished letter which Mr. Wise kindly allows me to reproduce; curiously enough—but very fortunately from our point of view—Swinburne agrees with the firm of Moxon as to the necessity of omitting some of the poems, and gives his own idea of the lines on which a selection should be effected:

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the Text of Shelley*, 1869.

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'Arts Club,  
Hanover Square,  
May 23rd, 1870.

'Dear Rossetti,

'In the 2 vol. and 1 vol. eds. together Houghton I believe has printed all of Keats's remains except one short bawdy song which was unfit for publication. "Cet homme vertueux a senti dans ses veines un chaste frisson à la lecture d'une telle chanson—Oh! Monsieur!"<sup>1</sup>

'If I were you—and I wish I were, for of all things I should like to edit a select Keats and do for him what I believe he would have done for himself if he had lived—I should do, without a hint from the publisher, exactly what Moxon & Co. want you to do—reprint 2/3 precisely. I should print in the order they stand—an order disarranged in the current editions—the poems contained in his last volume (edition 1820—it must be *chez* Moxon), line for line—"Lamia", "Isabella", "Hyperion", etc., the etc. including the Odes. Of the first volume I should reprint nothing whatever except the song "In a drear-nighted December" and some sonnets. There would then be just room for Endymion and (if you like—I should on the whole) Otho the Great—which has glorious passages and is almost throughout fine in style though crude in construction. (There is another fine dramatic fragment—2 scenes and a half or 3—"King Stephen"—in the 2 vol. Remains.) From said Remains I should also take "La Belle Dame sans Merci"—"The Eve of St. Mark"—the late sonnets,

<sup>1</sup> This alleged 'quotation is, of course, supposed to have been spoken by the much-suffering heroine of de Sade's *Justine*'.

notably that on his dream of Dante, and the two last of all—and two scraps embedded in his letters, the fragment

‘ “Mother of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!”

and the ballad-song on Meg Merrilies.

‘ There would remain fully 1/3 of his writings—valueless, or nearly so, except as studies for the special and esoteric class of students in art or character. This was exactly the plan I had laid out for myself when requested from the same quarter as you to edit a selection from Keats: except that of course on that scale I could only have given extracts from *Endymion* and *Otho*. It will be a priceless boon to all lovers of Keats, as the idiotic editions of Moxon—the only ones current—have actually and inextricably jumbled together his last and best work with his first and worst, so that till I had a copy of ed. 1820 I could never read the Ode to a Nightingale without finding some schoolboy nonsense thrust in my way a few pages off.

‘ Ever yours,

‘ A. C. SWINBURNE.’

The letter is exceedingly valuable to us. If we compare it with the contents of W. M. Rossetti’s volume (*The Poetical Works of John Keats* edited with a critical Memoir by W. M. Rossetti, illustrated by Th. Seccombe, London, J. Moxon, Son and Co. Ltd.—1872) we shall see that the editor has slavishly followed Swinburne’s advice. The volume includes indeed *Endymion*, *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Hyperion*, ‘Miscellaneous Pieces’, the *Odes*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, the *Sonnets*, *Meg Merrilies*, the ‘earlier’ *Hyperion*, *Otho the Great*, *King Stephen*, and a few more, i.e. all that Swinburne mentioned as worth reprinting

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and practically in the order he recommended—but scarcely anything more. It was known, indeed, that Swinburne had at one time thought of undertaking a selection from Keats; but it was not known that he had done so in the volume professedly edited by Rossetti.

The reader will find it interesting to compare Swinburne's 'selection' in 1870 with his *Encyclopædia Britannica* Article of 1882. It will be seen that, while the general attitude is maintained, Swinburne has become more critical and less generous about some poems or fragments of poems.

In fact, as early as 1876, a mild form of reaction had already begun to set in. Sir Edmund Gosse has preserved for us some remarks made by Swinburne in the course of a conversation on August 16th, 1876, the following of which concern Keats. The general tone is that of an informal conversation but gives an additional value to Swinburne's remarks; he says here what he feels and just as he feels it without any restraint or extenuation:

'He praised the *King Otho* of Keats, but of the Ariosto vein of that poet he spoke with the greatest contempt. He thought the vulgarity of *The Cap and Bells* quite extraordinary; he had drawn the attention of D.G.R. to it, who had said that if it stood alone it would justify all Byron's insolence to Keats. It alarmed Swinburne to think that Keats should have gone "back to his gallipots" after composing *Hyperion* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and that *The Cap and Bells* should be the latest of Keats's productions. He pursed up his mouth and made an owlish gesture with his eyes, as he added, "It gives one a horrid thought!"'

## SWINBURNE AND KEATS

We find that quite naturally Swinburne was prone to criticize the evil that is no doubt latent in Keats, rather than praise the good that shines forth in his works.

### D. KEATS'S LOVE-LETTERS: 'POST-MORTEM' (1878-84)

A remarkable incident is now to be noted as being of great significance in the development of Swinburne's critical opinion of Keats. In 1878 H. Buxton Forman published the now famous correspondence to Fanny Brawne which he had acquired from L. Lindon. Swinburne does not seem at first to have disapproved of this publication. But in January, 1884, he printed in the *Fortnightly Review*, under the general title of 'Post Mortem'<sup>1</sup> a series of four vituperative sonnets in which the sanctity of all communications of a private character is proclaimed with amazing energy and power of invective. Buxton Forman is personally taken to task and abused in the most violent and transparent manner especially in the 3rd sonnet where he is denounced.

'As foreman of the flock whose concourse greets  
Men's ears with bray more dissonant than brass.'

But with those personal remarks we are not here directly concerned. The sonnets are professedly in defence of Keats and directed against the parasites who prey on great men's corpses. What is of paramount interest for us is that Swinburne saw in the Fanny Brawne correspondence so much that was shameful and detrimental to the poet's glory:

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards altered to '*In sepulcretis*' and included in *A Midsummer Holiday*, 1884, with two quotations from Catullus and Heine.

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

'Make bare the poor dead secrets of his heart,  
Strip the stark naked soul, that all may peer,  
Spy, smirk, sniff, snap, snort, snivel, snarl and sneer:  
Let none so sad, let none so sacred part  
Lie still for pity, rest unstirred for shame,  
But all be scanned of all men. This is fame.'

and again:

'Mocked and reviled by men of poisonous breath,  
A great man dies: but one thing worst was spared;  
Not all his heart by their base hand lay bared.  
One comes to crown with praise the dust of death;  
And lo through him this worst is brought to pass.  
Now what a thing it is to be an ass!'

'this worst is brought to pass'! this was Swinburne's final attitude to the publication of Keats's love-letters: henceforth he will never refer to them but as a blot upon his fame. In fact his behaviour is here very mysterious and his true feelings hard to fathom. In 1878, on receiving Forman's book he wrote a grateful line of acknowledgment:

‘3, Great James St.,  
Feb. 22nd (1878).

‘Dear Mr. Forman,

‘On returning this morning to London after a month spent in Scotland I find your doubly acceptable and valuable present awaiting me, for which accept my most sincere tho’ seemingly most tardy thanks. The cancelled passage is of course especially interesting and significant.

‘I remain,

‘Yours very sincerely,

‘A. C. SWINBURNE.’

S W I N B U R N E   A N D   K E A T S

And again some three weeks later:

*'(March 15, 1878).*

'Dear Mr. Forman,

'A thousand thanks for Keats' letters which I find awaiting me on my return from Scotland, and can hardly, tho' overwhelmed with pressure of immediate personal business, keep from devouring at once.

'Yours gratefully,

'A. C. SWINBURNE.'<sup>1</sup>

To acknowledge the same book twice is strange enough in itself, though one may not be justified in suggesting, as Buxton Forman did when stung to the quick by the sonnets, that the first of these two effusively grateful letters was 'forgotten during some three weeks' debauch'. But the fact remains that these two notes show no criticism or resentment and may be considered as implying some approval of the critic's initiative.

Had Swinburne published the sonnets immediately after, he would no doubt be liable to the charge of hypocrisy. But this was by no means the case. He waited six years before venting his unexpected storm of scorn and indignation. How can all this be explained? Buxton Forman who, as is only to be expected, has no favourable explanation to produce, asserts that, before 1878, Swinburne 'had frequent access to a set of transcripts [of Keats's letters] surreptitiously taken by Sir Charles Dilke when the letters were lent to him by Mr. Lindon' . . . and that 'having spied, sniffed, sneered, etc.', to his heart's content he grudged the

<sup>1</sup> These letters, accompanied by a manuscript statement and a sonnet in the hand of H. Buxton Forman, are in the collection of T. J. Wise.

like privilege to others. This would, of course, put a different complexion on the matter, but it still remains to be proved. It seems scarcely imaginable that Swinburne if he had at the time intended to write his sonnets against Forman should have sent him *two* letters of cordial and grateful acknowledgment which would be as many weapons in his hands; we all know that Swinburne was careless, and he often showed great inconsistency in his behaviour: but he certainly was not mentally deficient. On the other hand, if we compare the two dates of 1878 and 1884 we are immediately reminded that a great change had occurred between them in Swinburne's life. He had come under the spell of Watts's personality. Besides, Swinburne had recently suffered considerable annoyance from the threatened publication of strictly private letters. On the other hand, Arnold had disapproved of the publication in his essay published in 1881. I suggest that Swinburne had completely forgotten his first impressions as expressed in his letters of acknowledgment, or perhaps that he had sent these without having opened the book; anyhow he was in a different frame of mind and submitted to new influences when he published his sonnets a few years later.

Our chief concern, however, is with Swinburne's attitude to Keats and, no matter what his true feelings may have been, the publication of the letters to Fanny Brawne are a turning point in the development of his critical views on the poet.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the review of the journal of Sir Walter Scott published in 1891: 'We are disheartened and disgusted by the woful revelations of such abject unmanliness and disloyalty as dishonour the names and degrade the memoirs of poets . . . as Coleridge and Keats'

and the article on Keats in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

The contrast between their two natures appears more violent than ever; Swinburne will never forget the unpleasant sensation which the letters were alleged to have caused him. His strictures on Keats's personality will become continual and ruthless; his criticism of his works will harden into harsh formulas of sweeping condemnation or qualified enthusiasm.

#### E. THE ARTICLE ON KEATS (COMPOSED 1881)

##### 1. *Intended Article for Ward's English Poets (1879)*

But these were after all nothing but occasional digressions and oblique utterances of one great poet upon another: Swinburne had never yet given a full and reasoned statement of his attitude to Keats. Ever since the Moxon offer had fallen through in 1866 he must have been vaguely aware of this gap in his critical works, for when in October, 1879, Edmund Gosse asked him to write an Essay for Ward's English Poets he immediately selected Keats and declined to undertake Coleridge or Blake on the plea that he had already fully 'said his say' on both of them, or Chatterton, in whom he took little interest.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately Keats was claimed by Matthew Arnold and Swinburne had to 'do' Collins instead. Far from resenting this arrangement he wrote that he 'would rather read Arnold on Keats than write on Keats himself'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Keats's idols, Chatterton and Spenser, found no place in Swinburne's temple.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to E. Gosse, October 10th, 1879.

2. Article for the '*Encyclopædia Britannica*' (1881)

(a) *Influence of Arnold.* In fact we have every reason to believe that Swinburne was highly pleased with Arnold's essay. This latter appeared in 1880 and its influence is very noticeable in the article on Keats which Swinburne wrote in the early months of 1881<sup>1</sup> for the twentieth volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (published 1882). In his condemnation of the Brawne letters and the unmanliness of Keats, as well as in the recognition of a more virile element in the latter's character, Swinburne is merely echoing Arnold. Arnold's negative influence can also be traced in the coolness with which the parallel between Keats and Shakespeare is referred to by Swinburne.

(b) *The Encyclopædic style.* It should first be noticed that in view of the fact that the article was meant for publication in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Swinburne adopted a terse and condensed style which is as unlike his true manner as could be imagined. His constant effort at setting out the largest number of facts in the fewest words possible is evident. Yet he sometimes forgoes this self-imposed discipline and some sentences are typically Swinburnian. In fact, many of his judgments acquire point and force by the very brevity of their expression. But the remarks have a tendency to become harsh and almost epigrammatic. The lack of sympathy in the tone is thus made more conspicuous still. Swinburne's criticism deprived of the mellow redundancy of a style which is its proper raiment becomes shrill and almost flippant. Although the *Encyclopædia* article contains the substance of what Swinburne had to say on Keats,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to E. Gosse, March 1st, 1881.

it should be remembered that under more favourable circumstances he would not have said it quite in the same way.

(c) *Keats's masterpieces*. As is to be expected, Swinburne can praise very warmly the recognized masterpieces of Keats. He frankly admits that 'he lived long enough to give assurance of being a poet who was not born to come short of the first rank'. The narrative poems are first commended, though not on grounds of narrative excellence: two or three lines and phrases erased 'would have left us in *Lamia* one of the most faultless as surely one of the most brilliant jewels in the crown of English poetry'. *The Eve of St. Agnes*, so popular among the Pre-Raphaelites, is described as a 'perfect and unsurpassable study in pure colour and clear melody' and calls up the memories of Marlowe's Hero and Shakespeare's Imogen. *The Eve of St. Mark* is 'no less precious' to Swinburne, and we know that he agrees there with Rossetti. *Isabella*, however, though overcharged with 'effects of splendid expression' is 'feeble and awkward in narrative'.

*Hyperion* is a triumph; but Swinburne highly approved of Keats's resolution to leave it unfinished; he emphasizes the importance of the Miltonic influence in it; this is of peculiar interest to us, as is explained below.

The dramatic attempts (*Otho the Great* and *King Stephen*) are commented on with remarkable moderation on the part of one whose standard is well known to have been high—so high, in fact, that he often failed to reach it himself. But *La Belle Dame sans Merci* receives long and fervent praise: one should always remember that the lure of the ballad was always strong on Swinburne's mind; it can be traced to early

memories of his childhood,<sup>1</sup> and found expression in constant study of the old versions, as well as in a very large number of imitations both in English and dialect. The Pre-Raphaelites were great ballad-mongers indeed, and this attempt of Keats enabled them to rank their idol as a pioneer in this particular line also.

The 'unrivalled and unequalled' *Odes* excite unbounded admiration. Each is very subtly characterized in a few words. 'Greater lyrical poetry the world may have seen; Lovelier it surely has never seen nor ever can it possibly see; The *Ode to Maia* is a divine fragment worthy of a place beside the highest.'

But even in this series of praise there is something to startle us: Keats 'has certainly left us one perfect sonnet of the first rank; and as certainly he has left us but one'.

That this commendation of the great masterpieces is not given altogether without qualification is shown by the strange reticence with which Arnold's claim for the Shakespearean character of Keats's work is received. Swinburne does not commit himself and avoids to contradict the statement. But, to me at least, the following sentence sounds very much like an epigram:

'Keats on high and recent authority has been promoted to a place beside Shakespeare; and it was long since remarked by some earlier critic of less note that as a painter of flowers<sup>2</sup> his touch had almost<sup>2</sup> a Shakespearian felicity.'

(d) *The earlier poems.* Thus much Swinburne was bound to concede under penalty of denying evidence and his own con-

<sup>1</sup> See my *Jeunesse de Swinburne*, Chapter II: 'L'Enfance'.

<sup>2</sup> The italics are mine.

science as an artist. It is in his strictures on the less famous poems of Keats that the strange antipathy of nature which alone explains the younger poet's attitude finds a clearer expression. That Keats's first volume is the weakest of the three he printed, everyone would readily admit; that it would have been by itself quite powerless to secure fame for its author, and would perhaps have remained a most obscure publication to this day is quite probable. But no one has a right to infer therefrom 'that in (this) first book there was little foretaste of anything greatly or even genuinely good'—no one who is at once a great poet and a great lover of poetry. And yet Swinburne proceeds to describe some of the poems as 'the most vulgar and fulsome doggerel ever whimpered by a vapid and effeminate rhymester in the sickly stage of whelphood'—while he concludes that 'the merit of Keats's work at 25 was hardly by comparison more wonderful than its demerit at 22'. The fact is, that Keats's style at its worst was never so vile as Swinburne would have us believe. But what matters most is that to the modern critic all the later developments of Keats's genius are already adumbrated in this first volume: the strange haunting diction with its redundancy of 'luxuries', 'minstrelsies' and 'revelries', the keen eye ever ready to 'transfigure' nature without 'transforming' her,<sup>1</sup> the touch of the born sonnet-writer, the whole metaphysical creed of *Hyperion*, as summarized in the sonnet on the Grasshopper, and above all the supreme felicity of such phrases or movements as:

‘the pillowy silkiness that rests  
Full in the speculation of the stars’

<sup>1</sup> See the description of the minnows in the poem ‘I stood tip-toe . . .’

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or:

'O for ten years that I may overwhelm  
Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed  
That my own soul has to itself decreed'

or the unequalled definition:

~~A drainless shower~~  
~~Of light is poesy; 'tis the supreme of power;~~  
~~'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm'~~

—all this is to be found there—and yet Swinburne would not see it!

*Endymion* cannot be dismissed quite in the same final and uncompromising spirit. But here Swinburne contrives to give such reluctant and inadequate praise as makes us wonder whether his attitude proceeds from natural incapacity or strong deliberate determination. Swinburne is of course at liberty to quote Shelley's opinion that *Endymion* is 'absolutely impossible to read through'; the statement is true from a certain point of view. But he certainly reaches the very height of perversity when he writes that

'*Endymion* rises in its best passages to the highest level of Barnfield and Lodge, the two previous poets with whom, had he published nothing more, Keats might most properly have been classed'.

It is true that it is only in the light of Keats's later achievements that *Endymion* and the earlier poems acquire their full value and significance. But it is sheer madness on the part of a critic to refuse to examine them in that light. Without

the clues afforded by *Lamia*, *Hyperion*, the *Odes* and the *Sonnets*, the inner beauty of *Endymion* might well have remained sealed and clouded to all times; but even then the poem, if studied, would have been felt to differ as utterly from the songs in Lodge's *Rosalind* as the sound of an empty jug from that of a full barrel of wine. It has been attempted with very moderate success to give a definite sense to the allegory contained in *Endymion*. But any intelligent reader cannot be blind to the fact that there is substance in the poem—dark and turbid though it may be. In fact it is this half-seen meaning alone which secures for the poem that modicum of unity which its length and the heterogeneous character of its diction are quite unable to effect. And this Swinburne cannot but have seen. But he would not let himself see it.

(e) *Keats's unmanliness*. The fact of the matter is, that Swinburne is continually judging Keats's personality through his verse. While criticizing, with good reason, the diction of *Endymion*, he mentions the passage 'where Endymion exchanges fulsome and liquorish endearments with the "known unknown from whom his being sips such darling (!) essence"' and presently comments upon it as follows: 'Such nauseous and pitiful phrases as these make us understand the source of the most offensive imputations or insinuations levelled against the writer's manhood'.<sup>1</sup> This sentence, I think, accounts for the tone of the whole article. Swinburne felt from the very first a natural antipathy for the personality of one whose genius he could not but recognize;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Swinburne's general attitude to David Gray and the 'inarticulate' poets.

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as he grew better acquainted with the particulars of his life through the memoirs, reminiscences, etc., this natural tendency grew stronger and more definite.

The publication of the letters to Fanny Brawne in 1878 removed his last hesitations and confirmed him in his attitude of natural hostility. His first impulse was to denounce the editor of the correspondence. But he only disapproved of the editor because he disapproved of the nature of the letters he edited. From that day on Keats was convicted in Swinburne's heart and the condemnation is here clearly and forcibly expressed:

'while admitting that neither his love-letters, nor the last piteous outcries of his wailing and shrieking agony would ever have been made public by merciful or respectful editors, we must also admit that, if they ought never to have been published, it is not less certain that they ought never to have been written; that a manful kind of man or even a manly sort of boy, in his love-making or in his suffering, will not howl and snivel after such a lamentable fashion'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this two-edged homage paid to one of Keats's masterpieces:

'The *Ode to a Nightingale*, one of the finest masterpieces of human work in all time and for all ages, is immediately preceded in all editions now current by some of the most vulgar and fulsome doggerel ever whimpered by a vapid and effeminate rhymester in the sickly stage of whelphood.'

Commenting on this passage, Mr. Harold Nicolson remarks in his excellent study of Swinburne:

'Now Swinburne's real intention was to protest against the bad taste of editors including too many juvenilia in collected editions, but at the thought of these editors, at the realization of how much he himself would mind if

We now know exactly where we are. Swinburne is entirely at one with Arnold, who had already denounced Keats's 'abandonment of all reticence and all dignity', his 'relaxed self-abandonment' which had in it 'something underbred and ignoble, as of a youth ill brought up, without the training which teaches that we must put some constraint upon our feelings and upon the expression of them'. Nor is this attitude peculiar to both; it was taken up by generations of muscular, Eton-trained scholars throughout the nineteenth century; and it is not so long ago that the tide began to turn; as early as 1867 Louis Etienne, in a remarkable article on 'Keats et Swinburne' published in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes* noted that Keats was 'le moins anglais des poètes, à cause de son manque de manliness' and proceeded to analyse with searching irony the manifestations of this national prejudice. From an human point of view it is hard enough to understand why Keats should not be entitled

the *Triumph of Gloriana* were to appear prefixed to *Songs before Sunrise*, the blood seethes to his brain and he brings his stick down smash, not on the head of the absent editor, but on the head of the unoffending Keats, who simply happened, all careless, to be there.' (H. Nicolson, *Swinburne*, 1926, pp. 190-1.)

That Mr. Nicolson possesses wit and critical acumen, no one who has had the pleasure of reading him will deny; but wit and acumen are not all; and the mere patient collation of texts has shown that Swinburne *did* intend to bring down his stick on the author, not on the editor; the editors were Swinburne's friends: Lord Houghton, W. M. Rossetti, W. B. Scott, etc., and Buxton Forman was only responsible for the publication of the Brawne letters. But the 'unoffending' Keats had committed in the eyes of Swinburne a very serious offence and he is here being chastised for it. This is a point of literary history rather than of psychology, and Freudian 'complexes' cannot prevail against a fact.

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to all allowances; for he felt the shadow of death across his brow from the beginning, and was haunted by the fear that he might not live to '*do the deed which [his] own soul had to itself decreed*'. A bright and healthy girl like Fanny Brawne would mean to the dying Keats far more than love ever meant to any man. It meant life, therefore the possibility of continuing 'to overwhelm himself in poesy'. With the despair which has often been observed in invalids he clung to health in the persons of those who surrounded him, and particularly in this strong independent image of womanhood whose love he had once thought to have won; he tried to drink life from her and to lose her meant the loss of everything else. From an artistic point of view the relation between what is referred to as Keats's 'morbidity' or 'unmanliness' and the highest qualities of his poetry is obvious; his keen sensuousness and soothing ecstasies have all the sweetness of consumptive euphoria; and it is the sense of joy and beauty triumphant over imminent death which gives his art that deep human touch without which it might appear incomplete. Keats stands thus absolved both as an artist and as a man. That Arnold, the most intellectual and the least intelligent of mortals, should have failed to share this view, we think natural enough; but that Swinburne, who was born a poet and bred an artist, should fall into the same trap, is a surprising phenomenon; but even more significant than it is surprising. It is in vain that he strives with Arnold and Houghton to recognize a manlier strain in the personality of Keats. We know that this personality was once and for all convicted and condemned and that it is intimately blended, in his eyes, with every mannerism of his style and peculiarity of his diction.

F. THE LAST STAGE: KEATS CONDEMNED FOR HIS  
ÆSTHETICISM (1884)

Strange and paradoxical as it all may seem, Swinburne, in his final estimate of Keats, is borrowing from Arnold the very formula which he professedly disproved. Swinburne is looking for '*a criticism of life*' in Keats's works and fails to find it. If Keats's perfection is to him something limited and special, it is in part owing to the absence of moral ideas. This appears clearly in Swinburne's criticism of Arnold in his essay on *Wordsworth and Byron* (1884). Attacking Arnold's definition, he objects that it could 'never be strained so as to cover the case of Keats, the most exclusively æsthetic and the most absolutely non-moral of all serious writers on record'. And yet, with a little straining and patching, Swinburne presently makes Arnold's definition his own:

'All sane men must be willing to concede the truth of an assertion which [Arnold] seems to fling down as a challenge . . . that a school of poetry divorced from any moral idea is a school of poetry divorced from life.'

But to such a school we know that Keats, 'le moins anglais des poètes' belonged. And we know for sure that Swinburne did not. It is in vain that the latter tentatively asserts that 'Even John Keats himself *except in his most hectic moments of sensuous or spiritual debility*, would *hardly, I should imagine*, have undertaken to den ythis'.<sup>1</sup> He might not, but all his work does. Yet Swinburne's statement is of the highest moment in so far as it enables us to get a clearer

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

notion of his æsthetical code. One should not wonder that the introducer in England of the theory of Art for Art's sake, the disciple of Gautier and Baudelaire, the admiring quoter of such phrases as '*Je pense que la correction de la forme est la vertu*', the critic of William Blake and the reviewer of Solomon's *Vision of Love* should in his heart condemn Keats for his absolute and exclusive æstheticism. There is no contradiction in Swinburne's mind.<sup>1</sup> He preached the equivalence of Art to Virtue. Keats proclaimed its equivalence to Truth. '*Save the shape, and art will take care of the soul for you*'<sup>2</sup> is Swinburne's ultimate and striking definition. But art must have a soul independent of itself. It is not on account of this soul that Art should be approved of or condemned; but without it, whatever it be, Art could not exist. And we all know that Swinburne took great care of the soul in his Art; it always has a sensuous, political, or theological inspiration which is well its own. And now we know that in Swinburne's eyes a large portion of Keats's work had no soul.<sup>3</sup> We know that we were right when we said that it was on moral and intellectual grounds that Swinburne disapproved of Keats's poetry. All that Swinburne is prepared to concede is that 'a school of poetry subordinated to any school of doctrine, subjugated and shaped and utilized by any moral idea to the exclusion of

<sup>1</sup> See my *Jeunesse de Swinburne, la théorie de l'esthétisme, L'Oeuvre, II: L'esthétisme et la Crise sensuelle.*

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Blake* (composed 1862-5).

<sup>3</sup> 'There is not a line extant by the author of *Endymion* which shows even a glimmer of such simple and cordial manliness of sympathy with the homely heroism and humble interest of *actual life* [the italics are mine] as informs every line of Gautier's noble little poem on two veteran survivors of the old guard.' (*Wordsworth and Byron*, published 1884.).

*native impulse and spiritual instinct*<sup>1</sup> will produce work fit to live when the noblest specimens of humanity are produced by artificial incubation'.

But on the main issue—namely the necessity for a moral soul in any work of art—he is at one with Arnold, for all his pugnacity and eloquence. And we find that eventually Swinburne has done the very deed against which he had warned Arnold in 1867. He has, half consciously and through a long winding path, joined—*horresco referens*—an advanced detachment from the great army of the Philistines.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This study of the evolution of Swinburne's opinions and feelings towards another poet has taught us a great deal about Swinburne himself with whom we are mainly concerned.

It has, I think, clearly established the instinctive antipathy of nature which separated the aristocratic poet, Belgravian-born and Eton-bred, from the untrained poet of cocagne. He resented the latter's want of education, perhaps his want of scholarship. He thought with Arnold that his was often the style of a '*surgeon's apprentice*'. The obvious answer that Keats was precisely a surgeon's apprentice<sup>2</sup> was not accounted by them as a sufficient excuse. Keats failed, in their eyes, to love or die like a gentleman.

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> See Professor de Sélincourt's edition of Keats's poems (1920), p. 586, in which a short list of Keats's vulgarisms of diction is supplied; I have no doubt that most of these were unconscious, and not at all 'dangerous experiments on the side of familiarity'.

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It has shown, moreover, that there existed in the case of Swinburne a real lack of sympathy for Keats's inspiration.<sup>1</sup> It struck him as strangely limited in scope and human depth. The unique example of the cultivation of Art for Art's sake afforded by Keats did not rouse his enthusiasm. To him there was no soul to the greater part of Keats's works. The sonnets to Leigh Hunt or Kosciusko would have better suited him as far as their inspiration went, but he knew them to be artistically inferior. It was on moral and intellectual grounds that he would have condemned the very masterpieces of Keats's poetry.

It is none the less evident that he was keenly sensitive to the beauty of these masterpieces and that his artistic enjoyment in some of these (*Hyperion*, the *Ode to a Nightingale*, etc.) was constant and deep.

This attitude, in its three-fold aspect, Swinburne must have assumed from the very first; the years merely confirmed and exaggerated its main features. It remains only to be remarked that while this attitude was almost completely forbidding any deep influence or half-conscious imitation on the part of Swinburne, it did not preclude a conscious and deliberate endeavour to acquire the highest qualities of Keats's poetic style.

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne was well aware of this, and his friends, so many of whom were idolators of Keats, must often have remonstrated with him. In a letter to the *Athenaeum*, dated November 13th, 1886, Swinburne mentions that the *Quarterly Review* accused him of degrading Byron and overrating Keats, and remarks: 'My *Essay on Keats and Wordsworth* is an answer. A higher authority [than the *Q.R.*] remonstrated with me for having overmuch exalted Wordsworth, and overmuch depreciated Keats.'

III.—SWINBURNE AND KEATS

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## A. THE EARLY POEMS (1849–60)

THAT Swinburne did make such a deliberate cold-blooded attempt at acquiring what he thought worth acquiring in Keats's poetry is, I think, proved above challenge by the first poem which I publish in this volume: this—a fragmentary epic on the theme of *Hyperion*—is dealt with in a separate introduction. We are now concerned with the bulk of Swinburne's poetry with a view to finding out whether, apart from such open and flagrant imitations, Swinburne's style was not in a more permanent and intimate manner influenced by that of Keats.

The poems composed by Swinburne during his stay at Oxford form a considerable body of poetry; they were all unpublished when their author died in 1909, and were bought from Th. Watts-Dunton, together with the other unpublished writings of the poet, by Mr. T. J. Wise. Many have since been privately printed by the latter and not a few were included in a volume of *Posthumous Poems* and in the first and sixth volumes of the Bonchurch Edition of the works of Swinburne. But even these are scattered and often undated. It is difficult for the student to form a precise idea of the extent and qualities of Swinburne's work at this early period.

Its interest is, however, paramount for us, as the poems it includes belong to the same cycle as the one with which this study is chiefly concerned; we know that Swinburne's style was not yet definitely fixed and that, after many other experi-

ments, he deliberately became apprenticed to Keats. The latter's influence might therefore quite possibly be traced in most poems belonging to that period.

We should, however, scarcely expect to find this in the earliest poems extant. There was no maternal ban upon Keats as there was on Byron, and Swinburne read his works at Eton. Sir George Young told me that in 1851-2 his schoolfellow was engaged on Keats and Shelley. But this first acquaintance was not to be resumed till a few years later, after Swinburne had come to Oxford. His earliest extant work, the unpublished tragedy named the *Unhappy Revenge*,<sup>1</sup> composed in 1849, contains songs whose metre is reminiscent of some Keatsian attempts; but Milton is the probable source from which both poets drew their inspiration.

*The Triumph of Gloriana* (composed 1851) has a classical smoothness and a certain languishing redundancy in the choice of epithets, which reminds one of the Keats of the *Epistles* and chiefly of *Lamia*. But here again this must be attributed to a common imitation of Dryden and Pope. The influence may have reached Swinburne through Keats, but he certainly had slaked his great literary thirst further up stream.

The Elizabethan plays composed at Oxford owe, of course, nothing to Keats's dramatic attempts. They are directly imitated from the originals of Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger and Marston. The same remark has its application to the border *Ballads* which Swinburne began to produce in great number in those days: Swinburne, we know,

<sup>1</sup> See my *Jeunesse de Swinburne*, where this work, which I discovered at the British Museum, is for the first time described.

admired *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and spoke highly of *Meg Merrilies*. But here again he possessed first-hand knowledge of the subject, and Keats had nothing to teach the author of *Second Love* and *Burd Margaret*.

In the body of the Pre-Raphaelite verses, distant echoes from the Keatsian style can, however, be recognized: the poems written under the influence of Morris (*Rudel*, *Lancelot*, *Arthurian attempts*, etc.), or Rossetti (*The Two Knights* and many sonnets), or in a more independent strain, show occasional traces of such an influence: a poem called *Letters* is in the metre of *The Eve of St. Mark*, a fragment of an *Epistle* to someone in Italy is not in tone unlike the epistles in the volume of 1817. But here again the influence is not a first-hand one: it reaches Swinburne through other writers, or is nothing but a mere resemblance arising from a common attempt at an imitation of the same mediaeval models.

Far more interesting for us is a group of poems in which, although it is Shelley's influence which predominates, reminiscences from Keats are here and there obvious. We know that Swinburne had, about this time, begun to study 'under' Keats; it is only natural that his schooling should not have been all in vain. Compound epithets of different categories are frequent in Swinburne's style: this may be a result of his close study of Hellenic poets, and it was certainly encouraged by his study of Shelley and Milton; but Keats may have had his share of influence here, as I have tried to show below in connection with *Hyperion*. The opening of a poem which Swinburne composed in 1857 for the Newdigate Prize competition and which is generally believed to have been lost, *The Temple of Janus*, affords

a good example of how the rushing stream of Shelley's influence was carrying along with it small fragments of Keatsian rock:

'Earth and the changeless powers that keep her fair,  
 The glories of the planet-lighted air,  
 The year's glad growth among its earliest flowers,  
 The deep and dreamless rest of golden hours,  
 When not a cloud the slumbrous lustre mars,  
 The motions of the music-wingéd stars,  
 The silence of the splendour-paven sea  
 Ere winds awake its many-voicéd glee,  
 The sounds and shade of forests, the swift gleams  
 And echoes of the everlasting streams,  
 These have I loved with such delight and awe  
 As guides them calmly by its ancient law  
 On their glad way unaltering; change and pain  
 At their mute bidding loose the wonted chain;  
 By their bright guidance was I led to see  
 Hope and those wingéd memories which to thee  
 Are life, and holiest strength, O liberty!'

Nor are the '*slumbrous lustre*' and the '*many-voicéd glee*' all. Sundry other epithets like '*lustrous*', '*myrtle-braided*', '*cloudy gold*', '*many-sceptred*', '*patient*' and such a line as

*'The music-measured sorrow of its tone'*

have a distinct Keatsian flavour. The *Ode to Mazzini* is already pure Swinburne with a faint reminiscence of Shelley. But the *Ode to the Night*, published in the Bonchurch Edition, yields a few other lines or epithets:

'With calm eyes full of meditation grave',

'Where thou dost sit in lone divinity',

'circling ocean', 'curvéd brows', 'chaos lorn', etc. And the short poem *Echo* printed in the *Posthumous Poems* has some words of unmistakable Keatsian origin: 'dewy maze', 'moss-paven', 'misty glimmer', 'pale Lethean lakes', 'dewy tresses', 'dusk waves', 'heaped flowers', 'lustrous ocean ways', etc.

But although a minor strain of Keatsian influence is recognizable in the diction of all these poems, the inspiration sometimes, the outline and rhythm always are derived from Shelley, who remains the most important influence.

It is interesting to note that in his *Monomaniac's Tragedy*, which was published in 1858 in the *Undergraduate Papers*, and which is presumably a satire of the 'spasmodic' poets (Alexander Smith and perhaps the authors of *Maud* and *Aurora Leigh*), Swinburne introduced a large quantity of burlesque verses; the diction of these delightful parodies is in part nothing but a violent exaggeration of the mannerisms of Keats's poetic style; some of the epithets are more particularly arresting: 'extra-paradisal', 'conch-like', 'lunar bowl', 'I feel very dead', 'rainbow-tinctured pieties', 'violet-poisoned subtleties', 'unspeakable despondencies', etc. Of course Swinburne is not directly parodying Keats, and he may not even have had his name in mind when he wrote this imaginary review. But he cannot but have been aware, that all these 'exquisite niceties', which he denounced and ridiculed in others, were only perversions and exaggerations of what had become through Keats a recognized poetic style. In what particular way this style was abhorrent to Swinburne, we are

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now better able to understand; and we may now conceive how Swinburne could in 1881 write of the diction of Keats's poems that 'such nauseous and pitiful phrases, make us understand the source of the most offensive imputations or insinuations levelled against the writer's manhood'.

*Conclusions:* This rapid study of Swinburne's early verse has yielded little to prove a direct and permanent influence of Keats. This confirms us in our belief that the poem which we publish to-day was nothing else than a limited and purely technical experiment. That this experiment was not altogether in vain is seen in those poems in which Shelley's influence has not quite obliterated that of Keats as far as style is concerned; and here and there in the diction of the so-called 'Pre-Raphaelite' poems.

### B. THE LATER POEMS (1860-1909)

#### 1. *Metres*

The constant difference which, as I have endeavoured to point out, separates Keats's genius from that of Swinburne is nowhere more apparent than in their use of metrical forms. It should, of course, be kept in mind that Swinburne was professedly a great experimenter in all kinds of rhythms and prosodic devices. According to Maria Kado's statistics Swinburne used 430 different forms in his poems. On the other hand, Keats does not seem to have handled more than fourteen in the three volumes he published; and the total would amount to forty at most if we include the posthumous pieces. Swinburne's originality in that field is self-evident; but the amazing point is that out of these 430 metrical forms, which constitute Swinburne's record, scarcely four or five

have been previously used by Keats. Swinburne had no use for Keats's metres, and probably thought poorly of him as a metrist.

Swinburne and Keats both employed, of course, the rhyming couplet; but Swinburne's couplet is at once more classical and Dryden-like in some of its features, and more free and violent in its use of enjambment and other licences. Surely nothing can be more unlike *Endymion* than *Anactoria* or *Tristram*: *Anactoria* shows a marked tendency to form series of complete classical couplets enclosing complete ideas; while the lyrical outburst which melts the first fifty lines of *Tristram* into a living whole is utterly beyond the metrical force which Keats could command. But if we consider the long narratives at the end of *Poems and Ballads* a certain connection may be apparent. The author of *St. Dorothy* and *The Two Dreams* had certainly read Chaucer; but he was no doubt familiar with *Endymion*.

Keats's one great experiment in blank verse is of so peculiar a nature and is so obviously copied from the prosody of a great model as to be unfit for comparison where questions of metre are mentioned. It should be remarked that Swinburne made very little use of blank verse in his lyrical poems; that of *At Eleusis* seems to be modelled directly on Landor; as for Keats's plays they cannot possibly have had the least influence on Swinburne's dramatic style.

The great feature of Keats's metrical effects is their constant *irregularity*; even so finished a work of art as the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* presents a remarkable dissymmetry in the distribution of lines which Swinburne, the great upholder of the principle of law and recurrence in poetry and art, could not but have strongly condemned. Swinburne, comparing

his highly elaborate *Odes* with those of Keats, might well have made Ben Jonson's complaint his own and stated that 'John Keats had no art'. His fine ear and deep scholarship alike would have prompted such a remark, and precluded his imitating the irregular forms in which Keats strove to express himself.

True, Swinburne used the six-lines stanza (as found in *Venus and Adonis*) three times: in *Before a Crucifix*, *Inscriptions for a Pedestal*, and *Locrine* (IV, 1), as against Keats's experiment in the lines *To Hope*; and the stanzas of *Isabella* (Chaucer's Ottava rima), find a late echo in the second scene of the second act of *Locrine*. But *Locrine* is nothing but a series of metrical experiments strung together, and Swinburne certainly was but little thinking of Keats when he attempted this feat. The same remark applies to the ballad-metres of *Meg Merrilies* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

The iambic octosyllables of the *Ode to Fancy*, and *Bards of Passion and of Mirth* could be paralleled in some of the choruses in Swinburne's Greek plays; but Keats is no originator here. And one of his favourite stanzas, the 'Spenserian', was never used by Swinburne.

The two poets were both distinguished as sonnet-writers; the difference in their treatment of this form is bound to be here more veiled; it is none the less quite apparent. Swinburne never has any crossed rhymes in the quatrains, while this is very often the case with Keats. On the other hand, Swinburne uses all sorts of devices in the distribution of rhymes in the tercets: c d d c e e , c d d c c d , c c d e e d , c d c d c d , etc. But he has a marked tendency to distribute his lines according to the c d e , c d e scheme, probably owing to the influence of Rossetti and the Italians;

this arrangement is very seldom observed in Keats's sonnets.

More significant still is the constant and triumphant use made by Swinburne of anapestic and dactylic measures; it is hardly necessary to remind the reader that some of his most wonderful and loveliest achievements were in this particular kind of verse. Keats preferred the iambics and trochees and his attempts at composing anapests (*To Some Ladies*, and the ponderous *Lines Written in the Highlands*) are strangely stiff and inadequate.

It is partly owing to this mastery over anapests that Swinburne's poetry is so conspicuous for its qualities of swiftness and movement: it is essentially 'dynamic and restless' as D. W. Rannie excellently puts it; Keats's poetry is on the contrary 'statical', it 'characterizes objects in repose rather than movement', it expresses 'effects rather than powers'. A remarkable instance of this is afforded by Keats's description of Bacchus' revel in *Endymion*:

'And as I sat over the light blue hills  
 There came a noise of revellers; the rills  
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue;  
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew!  
 The earnest trumpet spake and silver thrills  
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din.  
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin!  
 Like to a moving vintage down they came  
 Crowned with green leaves and faces all on flame;  
 All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,  
 To scare thee melancholy!  
 O then, O then thou wast a simple name!  
 And I forgot thee, as the berried holly

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By shepherds is forgotten when in June  
Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon:

I rushed into the folly.

Within his car aloft young Bacchus stood,  
Trifling his ivy dart, in dancing mood  
With sidelong laughing;  
And little rills of crimson wine imbruued  
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white  
For Venus' pearly bite:  
And near him rode Silenus on his ass  
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass,  
Tipsily quaffing.'

It is all very fine and pleasingly sensuous; but how very quiet, and, I was almost going to say, perfectly dignified! Now here is one of Swinburne's versions<sup>1</sup> of the same incident:

'So from somewhere far forth of the un beholden,  
Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,  
Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and golden,  
With sound of chiming waves that drown the thunder  
Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,  
Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,  
Terrible; firs bowed down as briars or palms  
Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze  
Fulfilled with clamour and clangour and storms of psalms,  
Red hands rent up the roots of old-world trees,  
Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas

<sup>1</sup> The other one is, of course, the *Prelude to Songs before Sunrise*; the tempestuous effect is weaker, but only by comparison. The above passage is taken from *Thalassius (Songs of the Springtides)*.

S W I N B U R N E   A N D   K E A T S

Made mad the moonless and infuriate air  
That, ravening, revelled in the riotous hair  
And raiment of the furred Bassarides . . .  
And in his ears the music that makes mad  
Beat always; and what way the music bade,  
That always rode he; nor was any sleep  
His, nor from height nor deep.  
But heaven was as red iron, slumberless  
And had no heart to bless;  
And earth lay sere and darkling as distraught  
And help in her was nought.  
Then many a midnight, many a morn and even  
His mother passing forth of her fair heaven  
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy; but he  
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone  
Riding the red ways of the revel through  
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's crownless crew.'

Keats's description might have been described as 'Comus and water'; but Swinburne's certainly is 'Euripides<sup>1</sup> and brandy'.

Keats has, therefore, been found to be a man of few metres and many irregularities, with a marked preference for 'still' iambic measures: Swinburne stands in clear contrast as a master of iambics and anapests alike, strictly regular in his prosody, and with an unrivalled gift for reviving or creating a world of metrical forms among which his genius lives and moves and has its being.

<sup>1</sup> See the choruses of the *Bacchantes*.

2. *Diction*

Swinburne's mastery of form extended also over the syntax and it can be safely asserted that since Milton no one has ever submitted the English language to the same strainings and twistings. He was, of course, confirmed in this tendency by his close knowledge of biblical, classical and Elizabethan literatures. To these three models, but especially to the first two, Gunnar Serner, in his remarkable study of Swinburne's language, traces his most daring attempts: inversions, double genitives, subjunctives, rhetoric figures, redundancies of words and constructions, etc. It stands to reason that Keats could teach him nothing in that field, and would rather have been in need of his lessons. It should, however, be remarked that the latter poet, for all his want of classical scholarship, succeeded, through a mere study of Milton and the Elizabethans, in securing some remarkable effects which are of unmistakable classical origin. Professor de Sélincourt has shown in his exhaustive edition of Keats's Poems that *Hyperion* abounds in elliptical sentences, repetitions, inversions and adjectival constructions which are purely Greek or Latin. This is not Keats's least merit: the form as well as the spirit of classical culture he rediscovered and recreated to a certain extent. But here again he was at best, a disciple of genius; and Swinburne was a master.

It is, however, in the province of poetic diction that Keats exerted what influence he could on the genius of Swinburne. I am convinced that Swinburne felt from the first that Keats's superiority lay in his use of vocabulary, and in particular in some of his boldest attempts at

reviving old forms, and coining new words. He denounced such attempts, when he thought they were failures; but he approved of them when they were successes; and he adopted them. Keats was here served by his very lack of scholarship which gave him an unwonted grammatical boldness; and he was inspired by his genius. That he was a great master of vocabulary, has been shown above challenge by the monumental *Concordance to Keats*, which is found to contain 8,700 words exclusive of inflected forms—more than Milton and as many as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together. What modern scholarship has proved, Swinburne knew instinctively from the first. And this is no doubt the chief reason why he attempted, in his 22nd year, such a close imitation of Keats's style and methods.

As far as substantives are concerned, Swinburne duly remembered the felicitous effect derived from Keats's use of the -ing or -ings terminations; such analogies as: *groanings*, *offerings*, *lute-breathings*, *sighings*, *shining*, etc. (Keats), and *groanings*, *love-offerings*, *lute-playing*, *stoopings*, *star-shining*, etc. (Swinburne), speak for themselves. The same parallels could be established between nouns ending in -y or -ies whose frequent use is peculiar to both poets.

But it is chiefly to Keats's mastery over epithets that Swinburne paid a deep and perhaps half-conscious homage. Swinburne never forgot the beautiful effect often obtained by Keats through the use of -ous adjectives; compare: *lustrous*, *slumberous*, *luxurious*, *tremulous*, *monstrous*, *murmurous* (Keats), with: *lustrous*, *slumberous*, *luxurious*, *tremulous*, *ruinous*, *mountainous*, *oraculous* (Swinburne). Their use of -y adjectives is no less significant: Keats uses more than 250 epithets of this type and Gunnar Serner

states that the *-y* termination is also a great favourite with Swinburne; compare: *watery, fiery, wormy, wintry, drowsy, dewy* (Keats), with Swinburne's: *watery, wintry, dewy, fiery, etc.*, and also the famous adjective '*fleshy*', whose derivation is similar and which has a symbolic value.

But this does not profess to be an exhaustive study of Keats's and Swinburne's language and their relation to each other; and I hasten to what seems to me the most striking symptom of Keats's influence over Swinburne; I mean the use they both make of compound adjectives. This peculiar feature of Keats's style has, of course, been often noted; the concordance gives a list of over 300 words for the *-ed* compounds only.

On the other hand, Gunnar Serner's conclusion of his comprehensive study of Swinburne's language is: 'After all the bulk of his formations will be found in the field of compounds, especially participle compounds'. To these, indeed, we must confine our attention. For his compounds of *nouns + adjectives, adjectives + adjectives, pronouns and adverbs + adjectives*, Swinburne had many other models than Keats: especially Shelley and the Hellenic poets. But in this particular category of words the influence seems direct and evident; especially in the case of what Serner calls composition with a 'non-genuine past participle', that is to say, with a word that has been daringly coined as from a verbal root, but which could scarcely be used alone or with the value of a verb. A collation of Serner's lists with those of the concordance gives the following characteristic instances:

**KEATS:** *lion-thoughted, green-kyriled, golden-feathered, drowsy-footed, lute-voic'd, purple-stained, fire-winged, fair-*

*eyed, calm-throated, full-throated, silver-throated, droop-headed, full-hearted, high-thoughted, incense-pillowed, pale-mouthed, rainbow-sided, faint-lipped, etc.*

SWINBURNE: *lion-throated, greenest-girdled, golden-girdled, fuller-feathered, pale-mouthed, slant-sided, fearful-footed, purple-pillowed, weak-winged, subtler-eyed, lowliest-hearted, golden-headed, cold-lipped, etc., etc.*<sup>1</sup>

A collation of the lists of present participle compounds would also disclose resemblances and identities. But these compounds are not so exclusively Keatsian as those formed with a non-genuine past participle; past and present participle compounds taken together form one-third of Keats's compound words; past participle compounds alone amount to one-fourth.

That Swinburne felt this and concentrated his attention on this particular class of adjectives is fully borne out by the imitation of *Hyperion* which I publish to-day. It will be seen that the text of the poem abounds in such compounds. In this limited but important point of diction Keats's influence on Swinburne has therefore been found precise and permanent. Although the effects derived from the same words are not always identical, it can be safely asserted that Swinburne's style would in one important respect not be the same, if he had never read Keats, or, indeed, never submitted himself to the strangely severe and deliberate training which is attested by the poems that follow.

<sup>1</sup> These compounds are, of course, taken from all the poems published by Swinburne between 1860 and 1909 without any distinction.

## 3. Style

But these technical remarks allow us to detect the strain of Keatsian influence only by means of collations and statistics. The Keatsian 'style', and by that I mean the general atmosphere which proceeds from the blending of metrical effects, vocabulary, and to a certain extent of inspiration, very soon vanishes from Swinburne's poetry. It is not to be found either in *The Queen-Mother* or in *Chastelard* in which the spasmodic-sadical or the solemn-prophetic inspirations hush the last vibrations of Keatsian harmonies. But these can still be heard in *Rosamond*, for instance, in such lines as:

‘but see  
How the wind drenches the low lime-branches  
With shaken silver in the rainiest leaves’

or:

‘I whose curled hair was as a golden gin .  
Wherein the tawny-lidded lions fell’

or:

‘Fear is a cushion for the feet of love  
Painted with colours for his ease-taking;  
Sweet-red and white with wasted blood and blue  
Most flower-like, and the summer-spoused green  
And sea-betrothed soft purple and burnt black.  
All coloured forms of fear, omen and change,  
Sick prophecy and rumours lame at heel,  
Anticipations and astrologies . . .’ etc.

Thy footed ghost on some unfooted lawn  
 Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret  
 Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.'<sup>1</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

This rapid parallel between the poems of Keats and Swinburne has revealed a clear though limited influence: Keats's poetic style is echoed in some of the early poems of Swinburne, in the play of *Rosamond* in the first *Poems and Ballads*; but scarcely in the later poems. On the other hand, Swinburne's deliberate attempt at acquiring something of Keats's mastery over the vocabulary—especially over adjectives and past-participle compounds, was not in vain and seems to have permanently affected his style.

A radical dissimilarity in the inspiration and sensibility of the two poets precludes, however, a more intimate influence; and all the many discordances in style, diction or metre which have been noticed are nothing but signs and consequences of this greater difference.

## IV.—SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

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**A**MONG the many unpublished manuscripts in Swinburne's hand which Mr. T. J. Wise generously allowed me to examine in the course of the years 1924–6, my attention was immediately attracted by a set of 12 quarto leaves, closely written over, evidently torn from a student's

<sup>1</sup> Compare also Swinburne's Spring with Keats's Autumn (*Atalanta*, Chorus I, and *Ode on Autumn*).

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

notebook. The manuscript had already been examined by Sir Edmund Gosse who had at once identified it as an 'attempt to continue and finish Keats's *Hyperion*' and diagnosed an acute 'case of study by imitation'. Having studied the 'case' carefully, I came to the conclusion that this fragment presented a very high interest from the point of view of the development of Swinburne's style; that, as an imitative poem, it was a real success; and that, considered independently as an original work composed by Swinburne at the age of 22, it contained nothing which could impair or lessen his fame as a poet; while it contained much which would help us to understand the patience and craftsmanship which he allied to the gift of his high inspiration.

### A. THE MANUSCRIPT DESCRIBED

The holograph manuscript extends to 12 leaves<sup>1</sup> of white ruled paper, quarto size, measuring  $7\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  inches, written over on both sides. The watermarks are: 'Edwin Smith', 'Fellows', '1846', '1849', and the figure of an armed Britannia seated in her throne.

Twenty-three pages out of twenty-four (pp. 1b-12b) are occupied by the imitation of Keats's *Hyperion*. The poem includes two books. The first book consists of 295 lines, but the original numbering (in Swinburne's hand) is 315; the 3rd line is numbered 20 and the fragment would seem to begin with the 18th line, but the recto of the first leaf

<sup>1</sup> These leaves formed a portion of a volume of faintly-ruled paper, the contents of which included two college exercises and three poems; *Epicurus*, a verse translation from Æschylus' *Agamemnon* (lines 1035-55), and a 'chorus' after the manner of Shelley.

(1a) is blank and the poem begins at the top of the page; besides the last three lines of the First Book (page 8a) are numbered 310-315; it is, therefore, very probable that the poem is complete as it stands, and that no more of it was ever written; but Swinburne, for some cause or other, numbered the lines inaccurately. The second book, whose lines are not numbered, includes 212 lines. The writing is remarkably clear throughout; the manuscript must be a fair copy.

In the printed text an effort has been made to reproduce the general aspect of the manuscript as exactly as possible; the number of each page of the manuscript is given between brackets on the left side of each page; the watermark and size of each leaf are given on the right-hand side. In the first book Swinburne's numbering of the lines is given on the right side of the sheet, and the correct numbering appears, duly bracketed, on the left. The foot-notes point to parallels in the diction of Keats, etc., and occasionally describe the peculiarities of the manuscript.

#### B. DATE OF COMPOSITION

At first, 1858 or 1857 was suggested as a possible date for the composition of the manuscript. The watermarks are here of no use, as is the case with most *quarto* leaves used by Swinburne during his University career. The conjecture 1858 seemed probable, as another manuscript (*First Love*) which has the same appearance is also attributed to this period. But we possess another clue which enables us to date the manuscript with a fair degree of certainty.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Scrawled off in the blank space at the top of some of the pages (*see* p. 3b, etc.) are lines and prose Speeches from the last play which Swinburne composed at Oxford, *The Loyal Servant*: the names of the characters and the identity of the words make this quite clear. *The Loyal Servant*, according to Mr. Wise's verdict, was composed in the winter of 1859–60.<sup>1</sup>

And as the jottings on the pages of the manuscript all refer to one of the first scenes of the first Act, one can safely assert that Swinburne had just finished his imitation of Keats when he began to write his play at the close of 1859 or the beginning of 1860. He was then 22 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

### C. THE POEM PROBABLY MEANT AS A PROSODIC EXERCISE

Swinburne's *Hyperion* (as it may conveniently—though somewhat inaccurately—be called) is not, as one might be tempted to describe it, an attempt at continuing and finishing Keats's poem. The subject treated is substantially the same—though with important minor differences—and the diction is so clearly based upon that of Keats that one could not hesitate a single second in detecting the relationship,

<sup>1</sup> I have no doubt that Mr. Wise is absolutely right on this point. But in that case, of course, the play cannot have been composed 'soon after Swinburne left college', as Swinburne was still residing at Oxford in the spring of 1860. See *A Swinburne Library. The Loyal Servant* (1859–60).

<sup>2</sup> Swinburne must have finished or interrupted his imitation of *Hyperion* when he went to Navestock in January, 1860. Stubbs then began to coach him for his degree, and, although he found means to write off his poem on the *Death of Sir John Franklin* 'at two seatings', he had not much leisure for poetry. (See my *Jeunesse de Swinburne*, Chapter IV: Oxford.)

even though the name of Zeus were changed to that of Mazzini or Victor Hugo, and that of Napoleon III substituted for Saturn or Porphyrian. But Swinburne simply retells in a somewhat different manner what Keats had more amply developed, and he does not carry the story much further than where Keats broke off. Swinburne is no Chapman to Keats's Marlowe, and—tempting though the conjecture might be—this is no case of a younger poetic genius trying to surpass one of his elders by a bold attempt at finishing off a fragment of recognized beauty on the same scale and with the same felicity of hand. In fact there prevails some mystery as to what was Swinburne's purpose when he undertook to retell a story which had already been told twice by Keats. True, Swinburne may not have known '*The Fall of Hyperion*'; but he probably knew it; for it had been published by R. Monckton-Milnes in 1857, and though the book was scarce and intended for private circulation only, Swinburne might very well have seen it somewhere at Oxford. Then why should Swinburne begin his poem *in medias res* with what is professedly the 18th line and number the lines erroneously at the end of the first book? One shudders at the thought that Swinburne prompted by some evil spirit and the consciousness of his own powers, might have conceived this poem as a supreme mystification—in the hope of passing it upon the literary world as a *third* draft or recast of Keats's much rewritten *Hyperion*—miraculously preserved in some unexplained manner. Fortunately the truth is likely to be of a purer and simpler nature. We know that Swinburne was at this period (1857–60) undergoing various literary influences. Far from being inspired by the pride and self-reliance of genius, he had serious

doubts about his own powers.<sup>1</sup> He was decided anyhow not to take any risks and, before he would resolutely launch on the sea of some great original work, to learn patiently his business as a poet, gain all he could from the study and sustained imitation of recognized models, and perhaps prove to himself that he could equal or surpass them in their own field. Many of these imitations or prosodic exercises are still extant; we may mention, among others, his imitations from: the Elizabethan dramatists, the Sonnets of Shakespeare, Browning's *Men and Women*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Arnold's *Empedocles*, the old Scottish Ballads, the poems of Morris and Rossetti, Shelley's lyrical poems, Baudelaire, and, in prose, Boccaccio, the old French Chroniclers, Balzac, etc., etc. Most of these exercises were conceived and executed in a very modest and matter-of-fact spirit—merely to acquire practice, art and facility. It is, therefore, highly probable that Swinburne's attention was called to *Hyperion* by Monckton-Milnes's publication of the alleged 'first version', and that he was stung into emulation by the instance afforded by Keats himself. With the two versions in front of him, he deliberately set to reproduce Keats's style in its highest form, possibly with the secret hope of improving upon it. '*Swinburne's Hyperion*' is, therefore, one of the many imitations on which he was then engaged. Let us not forget that the poem was written in a student's notebook. It is now high time for us to examine

<sup>1</sup> 'In reperusing my cantos [*Queen Yseult*] I think they are too imperfect, feeble and unfinished to publish for a year or two. A thorough rewriting would be good for some of them to prevent a monotony of tone . . . They [Morris, etc.] all, however, praise the poem far more than I (seriously speaking) believe it deserves.' (Letter to Nichol, December 13th, 1857.)

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these students' notes and find out whether they are worthy of the master whose golden lectures inspired them.

### D. 'SWINBURNE'S HYPERION': DICTION AND METRE

#### i. *The imitation of Keats*

I do not think that it can be denied that Swinburne's experiment was on the whole quite successful from the point of view of diction and metre. He had recently steeped himself in Keatsian poetry, and more particularly in *Hyperion*, and in this wonderful memory of his there still lingered phrases and cadences from the poem which he had selected as a model.

This is chiefly noticeable from the point of view of the vocabulary, and my foot-notes to the poem are the best commentary on this point. They show that Swinburne has made use of some words (chiefly adjectives) which are typically Keatsian, and that some of the most striking phrases in *Hyperion* are faithfully reproduced; among these are: *mazy dance, silence pale, primeval, starry dews, joyous, balm, calm, faint visions, cloudy, god-sophist, serene, sunny, lucent, slumbrous, unsceptred, bastioned, orbed, thorny, icy, sphered, fiery, luxurious, delicious*, etc. It is more particularly Keats's unrivalled boldness and felicity in coining past-participle compounds, which seems to have attracted Swinburne; and he appears to have revelled in this process of word-formation. Some of his compounds are bodily taken from Keats: for instance the immortal *full-throated, bright-eyed*, etc. Swinburne more commonly uses one part only of the Keatsian compounds and tacks on to it a new word as first or second element. This is the case with such com-

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pounds as: *thick-leaved, balm-breathed, deep-thoughted, rocky-based, thunder-throated, hard-thoughted*. But the imitation is generally more subtle, and Swinburne creates new compounds according to the rules laid down by the master. He is generally very successful in his formations, perhaps too successful; for the obvious delight which he takes in the experiment blinds him to a certain sense of measure and proportion, which never forsook Keats entirely and which remains after all his chief affinity to the spirit of classical art. Keats, in his *Hyperion*, which numbers 883 lines, has only 18 past-participle compounds; while Swinburne, in a poem of 507 lines only, manages to cram 27 words of this category. The point is important, and the comparison between the compounds of the two poets not lacking in interest.

*Keats:*

gray-haired	low-ebbed
quick-voiced	firm-based
self-hid	far-foamed
prison-bound	golden-feathered
sky-engendered	half-glutted
palm-shaded	open-eyed
tiger-passioned	faint-lipped
lion-thoughted	dark-stemmed
spirit-leaved	calm-throated.

*Swinburne:*

jag-toothed	balm-breathed	war-vext
cloud-conceived	sunny-bosomed	cloud-wreathed
sea-blasted	self-treated	thought-furrowed
cloudy-skirted	storm-chafed	well-framed

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silence-hallowed	rich-curled	hight-battled
far-sphered	sea-built	rock-fixt
bright-eyed	deep-woven	thunder-throated
music-tranced	war-wrinkled	hard-thoughted
full-throated	deep-thoughted	lightning-blasted.

The above list is invaluable to a student of Swinburne's language, as it shows clearly the origin of a tendency which was to affect his diction permanently;<sup>1</sup> in fact some of these compounds, as for instance the famous *thunder-throated* passed into his style—Keats's words and harmonies Swinburne will soon forget; but his compounds he will always remember.

The other compounds (noun + noun; noun + present-participle) are far less significant: *god-sophist*, *giant-race*, *slow-heaving*, *sin-breathing*, *calm-travelling* recall similar expressions in *Hyperion* (*giant-race*, *lawn-shading*, etc.); but compounds like *all-nurturing*, *all-distinctive*, etc., introduce a Shelleyan element; the *jag-toothed* at the beginning of the poem also seems to owe its origin to Shelley.

From the point of view of metre, it is remarkable how Swinburne has, in places, contrived to reproduce the slow or *static* effects of Keats's poetry. This he generally obtains by compounds, by -y, -ies, or -ing, ings terminations, and by a liberal use of the word 'calm'. In such passages as:

'He spoke and calm amid the breathless hush  
 Grey Saturn rising spake with dreamy looks  
 Where dim Philosophy slept vision'd faint'

<sup>1</sup> See Gunnar Serner's remarks on Swinburne's past-participle compounds: the lists he compiled seemed interminable, and he had great difficulty in selecting 100 cases as more characteristic.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

or:

'So having said, back to his cloudy dreams  
Musing he dropt, and ceasing husht the air  
That trembled yet melodiously and full  
With the calm awful music of his words'

Swinburne has certainly succeeded in curbing the wild gallop of his verse to the serene dignity of Keats's prosody.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. *The Miltonic Element*

Swinburne's acute critical sense is one of the most remarkable features of his genius; an 'imperfect critic'<sup>2</sup> he may well be, but I think that no other real poet has ever possessed so many of the qualities which tend to make a satisfactory critic. His chief merit is, of course, his keen sensitiveness to poetical influences, and he had no difficulty in perceiving in Keats's *Hyperion* a sustained attempt at reproducing Milton's style and manner. This he very clearly asserted in his article on Keats (composed 1882):

'The triumph of *Hyperion* is as nearly complete as the failure of *Endymion*; yet Keats never gave such proof of a manly devotion and rational sense of duty to his art as in his resolution to leave this great poem unfinished . . . on the solid and reasonable ground that a Miltonic study had something in its very scheme and nature too artificial, too studious of a foreign influence, to be carried on and carried out at such length as was implied by his original design. The faculty of assimilation as distinguished from imitation, than which there can be no surer or stronger sign of strong

<sup>1</sup> For other instances, see Preface to this volume, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Eliot: *The Sacred Wood*.

and sure original genius, is not more evident in the most Miltonic passage of the revised *Hyperion*<sup>1</sup> than in the most Shakespearian passage of [his] unrevised tragedy.'

Swinburne's critical sensitiveness was no less keen and subtle at 22 than it was at 45; keener and subtler it may well have been.<sup>2</sup> Milton's influence on *Hyperion* was to him self-evident, and he realized that through Keats he would have to imitate *Paradise Lost*. Hence it is that Swinburne's *Hyperion* supplies us also with a remarkable pastiche of Milton's style.

(a) *Swinburne and Milton.* The references to Milton the poet are exceedingly scarce in the writings of Swinburne; and were it not for some disappointing pages in his *Short Notes on English Poets* (1880) we should be rather in the dark as to his real opinion. The fact is, that Swinburne must have first read Milton at a very early age (probably at Eton, in the Aldine Poets) and felt at once absolutely and completely in sympathy with him. For on Milton's public and private character he never tired to lavish the most unstinted praise; he ranked him with Landor, Hugo, and Mazzini; Milton stood in his eyes for an ideal that he long cherished —that of republican England; and he would look back with regret to the days of

‘Milton’s white republic undefiled  
That might endure so few fleet years on earth’.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne believed the *Fall of Hyperion* to be a first draft. See below.

<sup>2</sup> See his attitude to the works of Landor, Browning, Fitzgerald, etc., and at a still earlier period his judgment on Falconer's *Shipwreck* (cf. *La Jeunesse de Swinburne*, La Vie; ch. III: Eton).

<sup>3</sup> *Ode on the Centenary of W. S. Landor.*

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

One action in Milton's life struck him as particularly admirable: the publication of his *Sonnet on the Massacres of Piedmont*,

. . . 'when death  
Shrank and Rome's bloodhound cowered at Milton's  
breath'.<sup>1</sup>

A series of parallels with Dante, Mazzini and Cromwell reveal a profound admiration for Milton's personality. But what Swinburne precisely thought of the poet and the writer is not so easy to establish. His admiration for *Comus* was limited and he defines it

'the faultless but scentless reproduction of a rose in academic wax for the admiration and imitation of such craftsmen as must confine their ambition to the laurels of a college and the plaudits of a school'.<sup>2</sup>

The pamphlets he disliked, and found 'no good sense in them'.<sup>3</sup> But he gladly acquitted Milton of any charge in connection with his relentless attacks on the dead king; for hate is a sacred feeling for Swinburne and 'ill it would be, abominable and absurd if the piteous and unpitied end of [a pontiff or an emperor] were to be held as expiation sufficient to reverse the branding judgment or silence the damning voice of history or of poetry'.<sup>4</sup> But for the poet of the Paradises, for

<sup>1</sup> *Sonnets on Elizabethan Poets*: Epilogue.

<sup>2</sup> *Age of Shakespeare*: 'Beaumont and Fletcher'.

<sup>3</sup> Article on Shelley: *Chambers's Cyclopædia of Literature*.

<sup>4</sup> *Short Notes on English Poets* (1880).

'Milton, with crowns from Eden on his brow'<sup>1</sup>

Swinburne has nothing but praise. The 'Calvinistic' theology of the poems does not seem to jar too much upon his opinions and while depreciating Christianity as a source of inspiration, he seems to tolerate in Milton what he rejects with loathing in Dante. Swinburne must have felt obscurely that, after all, there was in Milton's theology far less orthodoxy, and far more of the principle of liberty as he understood it, than was commonly believed.<sup>2</sup> Milton's alleged preference for *Paradise Regained* he understood and defended; *Samson Agonistes* he considered as its author's masterpiece.

The article on Milton—a review of W. M. Rossetti's *Lives of Famous Poets*—is perfunctory and disappointing; Swinburne writes too much about the man, and too little about the works. Yet this must not be taken as implying any reticence on Swinburne's part; he felt 'adoration' for Milton's personality; he was at one with him in the sphere of political ideals, the religious question was no insuperable bar, and of course he was highly sensitive to the artistic beauty of the blank verse which Milton had adopted from Marlowe.<sup>3</sup> Consequently Swinburne had very little to say about Milton. Perhaps, too, he realized that Milton's work was supreme but limited as an artistic achievement, and that his merits and greatness as a poet were so easy to define and impossible to deny that little room was left for commentary.

<sup>1</sup> *Transfiguration* (1881) included in *Astrophel*.

<sup>2</sup> See D. Saurat, *Milton, Man and Thinker*, pp. 123, 125 and 181–92; compare with Swinburne's *On Liberty and Loyalty*.

<sup>3</sup> This was Swinburne's own theory. See *Three Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 79, etc.

Yet—if we except Shelley—there is no other English poet to which Swinburne's poetic works have a stronger general likeness. The poem I publish to-day will help to bear out what has already been often remarked: Milton's and Swinburne's styles have in common their wealth of rhetorical effects and classical constructions or reminiscences: their inspirations are conspicuous for their strength and the amazing violence of their expression. The difference is, of course, that Milton's greatest achievements are in blank verse; and the prosody of Swinburne's tragedies has nothing to do with Milton. But Swinburne adopted the metre of the *Hymn on the Nativity* in his first *Ode to Victor Hugo* (1866); his iambics often recall Milton's; *Lycidas* has an obvious connection with an 'irregular Ode' like *On the Cliffs*; and last, but not least, the Swinburnian sonnet strikes me as being strictly modelled on Milton. After a few experiments Swinburne rejected the style of Shakespeare and of Rossetti. And his great definite achievements in that form (the sonnets of the *Dirae*, on Carlyle, and on Russia—which are masterpieces) are purely Miltonic in their irregular pauses, the length of the periods which never stops at the end of quatrains or tercets, but is drawn out to the full length of the poem, and the large, rhetorical resonance of their antithetic lines.<sup>1</sup>

(b) *Miltonic influence on 'Swinburne's Hyperion'*. This influence is glaring to any but a very casual reader; even after a deep and independent study of Keats's *Hyperion*. We are here only concerned with the diction and the metre. But numerous parallels are easily supplied.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the sonnets on *Tetharchodon* with Swinburne's *In Sepulcretis Post Mortem*; *On the Massacre in Piedmont* with the *Dirae*, etc.

The vocabulary offers some striking instances (most of which are recorded in the foot-notes). It would be difficult to mistake the origin of such words as: *incumbent, ambrosial, corrosive, stony, grisly, tempestuous, Melibaean, resounding, etc.* And many less characteristic words (*majestic, gigantic, headlong, landskip, tropic, brood, resounding, vainglorious, etc.*) can also be quoted as circumstantial evidence when it is noted that practically all of them occur in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*,<sup>1</sup> and are used more or less in the same manner.

But it is not in the province of vocabulary that Milton's influence is most clearly felt; Swinburne knew exactly what he was to expect from each of the models he had selected; he did not come to Milton as to a great master of vocabulary and verbal harmonies; but as to a lusty wielder of perfect classical sentences, a recognized authority in the art of poetic and grammatical structure—for metre as well as syntax in the case of Milton can scarcely be considered separately. In this, of course, Swinburne only followed in the tracks of Keats, but we feel that he followed with more energy. Professor de Sélincourt has noted the Miltonic peculiarities which are reproduced in Keats's style; most of these tests can be successfully applied to Swinburne's poem:

*Elliptical construction:*

'.... and new freedom quafft Delightful, such the joy of pain releast!'	(II, 180)
'Nor of his noble wisdom good to him'	(II, 78)
'Thence godlike life'	(II, 67)

<sup>1</sup> For the connection between the theme of *Paradise Lost* and that of *Swinburne's Hyperion*, see below.

also:

'such the fell power of Tartarus' (II, 201)—'tho' with their wiser king reluctant' (II, 210), etc.

*Redundancies:*

'this not knowing, that . . .' (I, 110)  
 'our own words . . . both what we speak or do' (II, 102)

*Classical constructions:*

'what strength . . . jars back' (I, 263)—'slew and releast him fettered' (II, 55)—'thus shamed and grovelling beneath an infant's arm' (II, 103)—'for such slight cause alleged' (II, 141)—'though fallen' (II, 163)—'such the joy of pain released' (II, 180)—'whom following we may reign' (I, 66).

*Repetitions:*

'Thro' all the circling universe of life  
 . . . One power . . . circles ever' (I, 78, 80)  
 . . . now choose  
 Fallen powers, for no other choice is left' (I, 183)  
 'O Titans well ye have devised . . .  
 . . . but not enough devised' (II, 91)  
 'Serene, above the murmuring din of earth  
 Nor else serene nor mighty' (I, 248)  
 'Up thro' the rich-curled smoke of incenst shrines?  
 Who bows and trembles at our awful shrines' (I, 192-3)

*Inversions:*

*stars incumbent, night ambrosial, sudden melody full throated,  
 alleys . . . odorous, bolts inaudible, race ancestral, brow*

*majestic, pendent fruits ambrosial, lips and eyes libidinous, tread elastic, their wiser king reluctant, etc., etc.*

Other more striking similarities, which amount to direct reminiscences or identity of phrases, are either recorded in the foot-notes or discussed below.

This impression of a very close and efficient Miltonic imitation is further strengthened if we consider the metre. Swinburne has borrowed Milton's frequent elision of a syllable when a juxtaposition of vowels occurs:

'From Bacchus' bright locks the ivy cluster'd fell.'<sup>1</sup>

This, though common enough in most modern poets, is exceptional in Keats. Some other elisions<sup>1</sup> are more typically Miltonic:

'Of all the giant race and strongest of limb'  
 'With lavish hand out-poured; such the fell power'  
 'Reign crowned by war. Ye have heard my sentence gods'  
 'Yet see I yet a higher and wiser way'

and also the disyllabic pronunciation of such names as Pentheus, Tityus, and the trisyllabic 'tempestuous':

'Stifled his voice and their tempestuous din' (II, 75)  
 just as in Milton:

'With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire.'  
 (*Paradise Lost*, I, 77)

This practice of *apostrophation* or occasional use of a

<sup>1</sup> The instances which follow are, according to Saintsbury, not so much cases of 'elision' as of introduction of a trisyllabic foot.

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trisyllabic foot is quite uncommon in Keats, even in *Hyperion*.

As Keats was very consciously following Milton he refrained from the frequent use of redundant syllables at the end of lines, a practice which was a feature of his earlier poems. Yet he broke this self-imposed rule in two or three very significant instances:

‘Hyperion from the peak loud answered Saturn  
                                  . . . though all the gods  
Gave from their hollow throats the name of Saturn’  
*(Hyperion, II, 380)*

and:

‘Die into life, so young Apollo anguish’d’  
*(Hyperion, III, 130)*

But Swinburne adheres strictly to Milton's principle and the endings of his lines are conspicuous throughout for their strength and sonority.

It is, however, in the general structure and movement of the verse that Swinburne's greater fidelity to Milton appears. His pauses are strong and varied, and he succeeds several times in constructing a purely Miltonic sentence, in which the sense ‘is drawn out from one verse into another’ so as to form, in Saintsbury's words, ‘a verse paragraph’. This, Keats never really achieves, or perhaps cares to achieve. But Swinburne's success is obvious or can be made so when we compare a sentence like:

‘. . . behold  
Our brethren here, by us in counsel lost,  
Lie undelivered, groaning in their bonds:

Typhœus here, the mightiest Titan, writhes  
 Upon a bed of thorny pain and fire  
 And groans from his deep chest reluctant flame  
 Fruitless; here Tityus the fell vulture tears  
 Pressing with ponderous bulk the groaning soil;  
 There Tantalus rackt by devouring thirst  
 And keen-edged hunger, parches in the stream,  
 Panting, and views the cool dark wave beneath,  
 And pendent fruits ambrosial; there another  
 Tied on the sharp rim of that ragged wheel  
 That grinds thro' him to the earth, then jarring whirls  
 Mangled aloft; and this by newer gods  
 Done, while we sleep or strive in fruitless war'

with Milton's:

'Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate  
 With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
 That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides  
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large,  
 Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge  
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
 Titanian, or earth-born, that warr'd on Jove;  
 Briareus or Typhon, whom the den  
 By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast  
 Leviathan, which God of all his works  
 Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream

So stretch'd out huge in length the archfiend lay  
 Chain'd on the burning lake', etc.<sup>1</sup>

(*Paradise Lost*, I, 191, etc.)

<sup>1</sup> For further instances, see Preface, p. 14.

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The relation is obvious. And Swinburne, like Milton, contrives by the mere force of syntax (expressing a logical sequence of ideas) to inspire his verse with an impulse and a rapidity of motion which are quite unknown to Keats's prosody.

One, in fact, is inclined to wonder whether some passages in Swinburne's poem (e.g. II, 179–212) are not even more Miltonic than anything Milton ever wrote; just as, in other passages, some features of Keats's style are unduly exaggerated. One thing, however, is certain; Swinburne's poem is far more Miltonic than Keats's *Hyperion*; the dependence of the latter poem to *Paradise Lost* has, I think, been overrated (Keats being the first to attach too much importance to the influence he was conscious of having undergone); but *Swinburne's Hyperion* is perhaps more Miltonic than Keatsian. And this is after all quite natural. Having detected Milton's influence in Keats's verse, and having perhaps exaggerated it, Swinburne thought that by imitating Milton he would be sure to imitate Keats; instead of trying to reproduce the former's style through an imitation of the latter, he went directly to Milton and borrowed straight from him some of his most glaring phrases and constructions. Keats's task was far simpler; he had to yield to the spell of Milton's influence which was unconsciously blended with the inner tendencies of his own genius. But Swinburne had to reconcile two different and external inspirations, and probably to check his own; the attempt was far more artificial, and quite naturally he was led to overdo the manner of his two models. But this was excellent as a prosodic exercise and rather served than hindered his purpose. And, moreover, Swinburne has left

us some passages in which he has achieved the amazing feat of beating both Keats and Milton at their own game.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. *The Swinburnian element*

But of course while trying to mix these two different colours on his palette, it was impossible for Swinburne to have completely washed away the tints of his own original inspiration. And it is particularly interesting to notice that at this early period, Swinburne had already created a style and a manner<sup>2</sup> and was only waiting until he could be satisfied that it was good enough for his purpose.

The mark of his individuality appears by glimpses in the diction of the poem; words like *immemorial*, *unfathomable*, *inaudible*, *petrifying*, *convulsive*, *libidinous*, etc., are properly neither Keatsian nor Miltonic and have a distinct Swinburnian ring.

On the other hand, the metre of the poem as well as the structure of the sentences not seldom reveal the hand of a third poet; in passages when Swinburne is not trying to reproduce one model in particular, we find that the speed and rhythm of the metre gradually increases, while a greater number of short grinding verbs appear as so many sinews on the contracted limbs of the lines. It is interesting to compare the following instances with the Keatsian lines quoted above:

‘a sudden clangour yelled  
From all the host, harsh braying, as the roar  
Of charging trumpets on the battle’s verge

<sup>1</sup> See Preface to this volume.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ode to Mazzini* (1857) and *Temple of Janus* (1857).

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When shrieks the air with shafts, and clashes round  
With clarions'

or:

'and thus he spoke  
With voice to quell the thunder and make shrink  
Its bolts inaudible, and hand to hurl  
The baffled lightning strong, or dash down towers'.<sup>1</sup>

### *Conclusions*

These three elements go to the making of the poem, but it should be remembered that the first two are by far the most important, and that on the whole Swinburne's success as an imitator is considerable. If we had to attempt a close determination of the different styles, we might say that after a Miltonic opening, the poem becomes Keatsian as far as page 4*b*; pages 5*a*-7*a* are on the whole Miltonic; 7*b* and 8*a* are distinctly in the style of Keats; 8*a*-9*b* are also chiefly reminiscent of Keats; and the rest of the poem (10*a*-12*b*) recalls Milton very closely; while Swinburnian touches can here and there be noted.

### E. 'SWINBURNE'S HYPERION': THE INSPIRATION

#### I. *The story*

The course of events as described in *Swinburne's Hyperion* can be thus briefly summarized.

*Book I.*—The poem opens with a description of hell and the torments experienced by the fallen Titans: Ixion,

<sup>1</sup>

For further instances, see Preface, pp. 15-16.

Pentheus, etc. [1-31]; Atlas laments their fate and calls on someone wiser than himself to advise them [32-66]. Saturn's speech: life and destiny are inseparable and must be both accepted [67-120]. Oceanus preaches submission to existing circumstances [121-54]. Cœus advises war and is cheered by the Titans [155-92]. The Olympians are seized with terror in spite of Zeus' and Pallas' efforts [193-315].

*Book II.*—The Titans are still discussing the situation: Porphyryion violently attacks Zeus (1-40). Prometheus unsuccessfully recommends craft and intellectual triumph (41-80). Rhœtus' speech: he advises the immediate release of the tortured Titans as a means to increase their number (81-155). The tormented ones are delivered and the great army sallies forth in good marching order [156-212].

## 2. Keatsian Sources

(a) '*Hyperion*' and its recast. The story is, on the whole, that of Keats's *Hyperion*. It should be noted that it is based on the fragment printed in 1820, and not at all on the recast which is known nowadays as *The Fall of Hyperion*. This recast was first printed for private circulation by R. Monckton-Milnes in 1856, and it is possible that Swinburne may have seen it in this form; indeed it must have been this publication which called back Swinburne's attention to the poem he had first read at Eton. But the *Fall* was then generally considered as a first draft and this view was held by critics as late as 1887, when it was exposed as a fallacy by Sidney Colvin.<sup>1</sup> When Swinburne wrote in 1882:

<sup>1</sup> See Professor de Sélincourt: Notes on the *Fall of Hyperion*.

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'Fortified and purified as [*Hyperion*] had been on a first revision when much introductory allegory and much tentative effusion of sonorous and superfluous verse had been rigorously clipped down or pruned away, it could not long have retained spirit enough to support or inform the shadowy body of a subject so little charged with tangible significance,'

it is obvious that he considered the *Fall* as a first draft, and *Hyperion* as a recast.<sup>1</sup> It stands to reason that, in a prosodic exercise, Swinburne would concentrate his attention on what he thought to be the later and more polished version of Keats's epic. My foot-notes give accordingly very few references to the *Fall*; but I have quoted from it whenever it seemed to offer a striking parallel, as it is possible that Swinburne had already seen it.

(b) *Swinburne's and Keats's mythologies compared.* If we compare the first version of *Hyperion* with that of Swinburne we find that the outline is on the whole similar: the Titans' desire to revolt, the conciliatory speeches of Oceanus and Saturn, Enceladus' call to arms, and the final decision to rebel have all their equivalents in Swinburne. But we are at once struck by surprising differences: (1) First we must mention the absence of the central figure of Hyperion. Swinburne might have introduced him later in the poem, but it seems more probable that he deliberately set him aside. He does not seem to have realized the vital importance of Hyperion in Keats's conception; he was to write in 1882 that the poem 'could not long have retained spirit enough to

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, this sentence has remained uncorrected to this day through the successive editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

support or inform the shadowy body of a subject so little charged with tangible significance'. He was apparently blind to the symbolical meaning of Hyperion's struggle with Apollo and the presumed victory of the latter. (2) Swinburne carries the story a little further than Keats; for the concluding lines of his poem show the Titanic army leaving hell to march against Olympus, while Keats breaks off before they can take any action. (3) Swinburne, while preserving many of Keats's Titans, has completely suppressed the Titanesses. (4) The names of Swinburne's Titans do not on the whole correspond with those mentioned in *Hyperion*.

Keats quotes: Saturn, Thea, Hyperion, Cælus, Ixion, Cœus, Gyges, Briareus, Typhon, Dolor, Porphyryion, Mnemosyne, Creus, Sapetus, Cottus, Caf, Tellus, Asia, Enceladus, Atlas, Phorcus, Oceanus, Thetys, Clymene, Themis and Ops.

Of these Swinburne adopts seven: Atlas, Saturn, Cœus, Porphyryion, Typhon (or Typhaeus), Oceanus and Themis. The rest he dismisses and introduces instead: Penteus, Ixion, Prometheus, Rhœtus, Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus.

Keats's classical sources were Chapman's translations (from Homer and Hesiod), Ovid, Ronsard and Milton, and chiefly Lemprière's dictionary; for, if I may differ from Professor de Sélincourt, I think it obvious that, once he had chosen his theme, Keats would naturally turn to his dictionary in order to get the details he wanted and set up the frame of his story. But Swinburne was not dependent on Keats for matters of classical scholarship.

## 3. Classical Sources

The lists I have quoted make it plain that Swinburne made use of other sources. These seem to be two passages from Ovid and Horace:<sup>1</sup>

Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (IV, 445–64) supplies the names of Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus and Ixion, who are described as Giants and whose tortures are depicted.

Horace (*Odes*, III, 4) gives us a still fuller list including the unexpected Rhœtus for whose presence among the Titans Swinburne seems to have no other authority than this passage:

. . . 'Scimus ut impios  
Titanas immanemque turmam  
Fulmine sustulerit caduco,  
Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat  
Ventosum, et urbes, regnaque tristia;  
Divosque mortalesque turbas  
Imperio regit unus aequo.  
Magnum illa terrorem intulerat Jovi  
Fidens juventus horrida brachiis,  
Fratesque tendentes opaco  
Pelion imposuisse Olympo.  
Sed quid Typhœus, et validus Mimas  
Aut quid minaci Porphyron statu,  
Quid Rhœtus evulsisque truncis

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne knew, of course, the references in the *Odyssey* and especially those in Hesiod's *Theogony*. The *Poetae Græci*, which was the Eton text-book in Swinburne's days and which the poet knew intimately has a long extract from the *Theogony* describing precisely the Titans' war against Zeus (line 725, etc.). But these sources he does not seem to have used here.

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Enceladus jaculator audax,  
Contra sonantem Palladis aegida  
Possent ruentes? Hinc avidus stetit  
Vulcanus; hinc matrona Juno; et  
Nunquam humeris positurus arcum.  
Qui rore puro Castaliæ lavit  
rines solutos, qui Lyciæ tenet  
Dumeta natalemque sylvam,  
Delius et Patareus Apollo.  
Vis consili expers mole ruit sua:  
Vim temperatam di quoque provehunt  
In majus; idem odere vires  
Omnes nefas animo moventes.  
Testis mearum centimanus Gyges  
Sententiarum, notus et integrae  
Tentator Orion Dianæ,  
Virginea domitus sagitta.  
Injecta monstris terra dolet suis,  
Mæretque partus fulmine luridum  
Missos ad Orcum; nec peredit  
Impositam celer ignis Ætnam:  
Incontinentis nec Tityi jecur  
Relinquit ales, nequitiae additus  
Custos: amatorem trecentæ  
Pirithoum cohibent catenæ.'

But Pentheus remains unaccounted for and does not seem to have ever been reckoned among the Titans. The presence of Agave's unfortunate victim must be a freak of Swinburne's imagination. Pallas' attitude during the Olympian panic is quite in the classical tradition.

4. *Miltonic parallels*

\*It was observed by Keats himself that the theme of his *Hyperion* had a great similarity with that of the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. But when we compare Swinburne's version with Milton's poem, what was merely a general likeness of outline becomes a remarkable parallelism in structure and detail:

The description of hell at the beginning of the poem recalls Milton's in *Paradise Lost*, I, 50-81.

The speeches of Atlas, Cœus, Porphyron and Rhœtus have their parallel in the speech of Moloch (*Paradise Lost*, II, 51-105: 'My sentence is for open war', etc.).

On the other hand, the words of Saturn, Oceanus and Prometheus have to a certain extent their counterpart in the words of Belial (*Paradise Lost*, II, 119-225).

The long architectural metaphor at the end of the first book is inspired from *Hyperion*, but also reminds one of the descriptions of Pandemonium:

'Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
With golden architrave.'  
(*Paradise Lost*, I, 710-30)

The tortured Titans are released from their pains in much the same way as the fallen angels fly from the surface of the burning lake at the call of their Prince's voice (*Paradise Lost*, I, 192-340).

The description of the Titanic army is intensely Miltonic. It seems to be a mere transposition from *Paradise Lost*, II, 514, 520, when

'of this Session ended they bid cry  
With trumpets regal sound the great result',

and from *Paradise Lost*, I, 530–71, when

'thronging Helms  
Appear'd and serried shields in thick array  
Of depth immeasurable'.

Finally, the reference to the revolving gates of hell is almost certainly a reminiscence from Satan's escape through the complicity of Sin and Death (*Paradise Lost*, II, 871–89).<sup>1</sup>

### 5. *The Swinburnian element*

It is, perhaps, unfair to give too much attention to the inner inspiration of a poem which was conceived by Swinburne merely as a prosodic exercise. It may be argued that the form here is everything and that the poet did not give the slightest thought to the matter of his verse. But I am strongly tempted to consider that this was not Swinburne's attitude.

It has been noted that by discarding Hyperion, Swinburne seemed to have lost all the point and significance of Keats's poem as expressed in Oceanus' speech (*Hyperion*, II, 173–243):

'We fall by course of Nature's law, not force  
Of thunder or of Jove. Great Saturn thou

<sup>1</sup> *Swinburne's Hyperion* may also have been vaguely influenced by R. H. Horne's *Orion* (1843), which the poet had read at Eton with great admiration. (See my *Jeunesse de Swinburne*, Chapter III: Eton.)

Hast sifted well the atom-universe . . .  
 [But] first as thou wast not the first of powers  
 So art thou not the last; it cannot be . . .  
 As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;  
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
 In form and shape compact and beautiful . . .  
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
 And fated to excel us, as we pass  
 In glory that old Darkness . . .  
 . . . . . for 'tis the eternal law  
*That first in beauty should be first in might.'*<sup>1</sup>

This remarkable passage which loads the whole of Keats's poem with a deep and serene meaning and is a most remarkable attempt at giving a logical explanation for the old blind law of Greek fatality, Swinburne did not, or probably would not, see; this was too purely æsthetic for him and he thought that the subject was 'too little charged with tangible significance'.

But we should not be unfair and think that Swinburne has completely and unconsciously spoilt Keats's great poem, by merely preserving the body and missing the subtle soul which inspires it. In exchange for Keats's æsthetic philosophy, which he resolutely rejected, Swinburne has supplied a philosophy of his own which is based on the Greek idea of inevitable fatality, and on a more original theory of pantheism. This is clearly expressed in Saturn's speech in which is proclaimed the existence of an inmost

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.

power which 'circles through the circling universe'. This inward will is at once life and destiny, for one cannot be distinguished from the other, and our own existence is but a proof of the power of the great will. We should, therefore, yield to the universal law of change and seek happiness in the intellectual contemplation of truth.

We may well prefer Keats's attitude as being simpler and newer, and above all more poetic in its essence; but we cannot deny that Swinburne's attitude is nearer to the Greek spirit.

The important thing for us is that Swinburne while reproducing the form of Keats's poem has not accepted its philosophy; and that he has substituted a philosophy of his own, which he was to develop and exaggerate in all his later works: first, the idea of blind, necessary, irresistible fatality which he adopted from the Greek models of literature, but which he made quite his own by the depth and extension he gave to it;<sup>1</sup> and secondly, the pantheistic tendency which lies at the root of the theology of *Songs before Sunrise* and many other masterpieces.)

But what is of more direct interest still is that this poem, while supplying early and important instances in which these ideas occur, shows that they are connected in a way which might otherwise have remained obscure: Swinburne's fatalism proceeds from his pantheism. It is because we are part of the 'informing destiny' and 'regent will' of the world that we cannot resist its decrees.) Hence the folly of a revolt which Swinburne sometimes advocated (cf. *Atalanta*, etc.), but which he always condemned from the deeper and

<sup>1</sup> See the works of Swinburne, *passim*. And in particular *The Tale of Balen*; also *Atalanta* and *Tristram*.

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purely theological point of view (as in *Hertha* and the *Hymn of Man*). Swinburne's great task will be to attune his thoughts and passions to those of the natural world as he understands it. This truth, which he may have learnt from Æschylus, he laid to his heart and adopted; and he is always seen, in his moments of deeper and clearer inspiration, striving to make his mind

‘equal with the seas . . . .  
And the equal year’s alternatives’.

These lines are borrowed from the *Prelude to Songs before Sunrise*, in which is embodied all that is purest and highest in Swinburne's thought; but as early as 1859, the poet had written:

‘Fools are we, this not knowing, that the same  
Is Life and Destiny, nor without one  
Exists the other regent of itself’.

*Conclusions*

It has been found that as far as the inspiration is concerned Swinburne's debt to Keats is less considerable than in the case of diction and metre. This was only to be expected as Swinburne came to Keats as to a master of form, not a prophet of philosophic truths. The general outline of the story he borrowed and followed fairly closely, but he supplied many additional details out of his own classical scholarship, and was considerably influenced by the parallelism of his story with the theme of the first two books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Moreover, Swinburne destroyed the philosophical significance of Keats's conception by discarding the figure of Hyperion, but he introduced, quite consciously I.

think, a different philosophical tendency based upon his own theories of pantheism and universal Fatality.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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**I**N the course of this study of the relations existing between Swinburne and Keats I have encountered many different problems and reached, I trust, some interesting solutions:

In the first part of this Essay I have shown that Swinburne's admiration for Keats's genius, though deep and genuine, was limited and qualified; it has been possible to explain this attitude by the deep antipathy, physical, sentimental and intellectual which separates the two poets and the consecutive opposition in their artistic theories.

In the second part a close though rapid study of Swinburne's poetry has revealed a clear but very limited strain of Keatsian influence; its importance is however great, as it seems, in one of its forms, to have permanently affected the poet's diction. And from a more general point of view there can be no doubt that this early exercise helped Swinburne in acquiring that grand style or supreme dignity of diction at which he seems to have been aiming from the very first and which he so effectually preserved throughout his poetical career.

It should not, however, be forgotten that our chief, if not our sole, aim has been to throw light on the poem which we publish to-day. The third part of this Essay is more particularly devoted to it, but the whole of the Introduction has no other purpose.

In this respect, I trust that it has been established that

*Swinburne's Hyperion* was meant as a prosodic exercise; that it was attempted in a very practical and deliberate manner apart from any deep feeling of enthusiasm for the model it professed to imitate, and that as such it is typical of Swinburne's attitude at a very important stage of the development of his genius. This exercise, as we have seen, was not fruitless; for years Swinburne was to remember many of the things he had learnt from Keats; and some others he was never to forget.

I want, in conclusion, to insist on the remarkable instance of conscious, deliberate imitation of a not over-congenial model afforded by *Swinburne's Hyperion*. We are inevitably reminded of another poet's attitude: Shelley's kindness and gift of sympathy prompted him to take in Keats's personality an interest which Swinburne could never have felt; but Keats did not reciprocate the feeling and it may be said that there was little natural affinity between the two men; yet Shelley was drawn to Keats's poetry—to whose defects he must have been particularly sensitive—by an obscure sense that this poet possessed in the highest degree the very qualities in which his genius was deficient; he felt that Keats was 'more Greek', more classical, more sensuous, more purely an artist than he was. And he read his poetry because it improved him. I suggest that this was also the case with Swinburne who had so much in common with Shelley. I do not want to press a parallel which would prove unfair and inadequate; but when I first saw and read *Swinburne's Hyperion* among Mr. Wise's manuscripts, I found myself unexpectedly thinking of the copy of Keats's *Hyperion* which was found doubled up in Shelley's pocket when his body was washed ashore.

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

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# SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

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[Page: 1b]

[Watermark: 'Fellows' white ruled paper  
Quarto size:  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  inches]

## [BOOK I]

Not thus, but with the fiery speed all rent  
Shrieks round upon the sharp jag-toothed wheel  
The father of the cloud-conceivēd brood.

20

There Pentheus writhes & tears with teeth & nails

[5] The solid ground, to creep & hide his head  
Even in the very heart of pain & night;  
So sorely sham'd remembrance vexes him  
Of that dim evening on Cithœron's height  
Where 'mid the lowering glooms & hanging rocks

25

[10] He couched, to scoff the secrecy of heaven,  
And Bacchus flashing thro' the mazy dance  
With torches glanced, & loose curls wreath'd with grapes;  
But him swift vengeance rent & the blind hand  
Of wild Agave, & the hideous glades

30

[l. 1] *Hyperion*, I, 3, 180, 347.

[l. 2] 'jag-toothed'. A favourite word with Shelley: 'jagged-jawed lions', etc.

[l. 3] 'And Sky-engendered, son of Mysteries' (*Hyperion*, I, 130). The 'father of the cloud-conceivēd brood' is Ixion.

[l. 4] Not mentioned by Keats. Probably suggested by Euripides' *Bacchantes*.

[l. 11] *Sonnet to G. A. W.*, 8: 'Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance'.

[l. 12] *Hyperion*, I, 273: 'But ever and anon the glancing spheres'.

[l. 4-14] It is interesting to compare these early lines with Swinburne's

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

[15] Dew'd with his showering blood & entrails torn.

All these and more, the towering livid air  
Of that unmeasur'd cave in earth's dim womb  
Half show'd, half by concealment direr made,  
As hideous things half seen loom'd from afar.

35

[20] Here wail'd the Giants, hidden & abased,  
Not wholly crush'd, before that second fall  
More dreadful, as from height more glorious, when

[Page: 2a]

[Watermark: 1849. Quarto size]

Crushed into black eternal sleep they lay,  
And earth moan'd, taking back her mightiest sons.

40

[25] As the sea-blasted pines, bent bleak & rough,  
On some lone shore clouded by screaming mews,  
Wail in the wind that tears the desolate heath;  
So thro' the prostrate ranks unanimous ran  
A trembling moan, that shudder'd into air

45

later version of the Story of Pentheus as it appears in Tiresias (*Songs before Sunrise*):

'O mountain whereon Gods made chase of Kings,  
Cithæron, thou that sawest on Pentheus dead  
Fangs of a mother fasten and wax red  
And satiate with a son thy swollen springs,  
And heardst her cry fright all thine eyries' nests  
Who gave death suck at sanguine-suckling breasts.'

[l. 19] 'half-seen'. Cancelled reading: 'unseen'.

[l. 25] *Hyperion*, II, 116 and 122:

'There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines . . .  
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines'

[l. 26] *Fall of Hyperion*, I, 105: 'And clouded all the altar with soft smoke'.

[l. 28] *Hyperion*, II, 65: 'Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else'.

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

- [30] And died; & they lay low in silence pale,  
 Shadows amid a shadowy world, until  
 Slow heaving his broad bulk, unbent as yet  
 With weight of stars incumbent, Atlas rose      50  
 Painfully, unlike the rapid joyous strength
- [35] That mov'd him glorying thro' the exultant heavens;  
 And with sad words & mourning broke the night:  
     O fall'n shapes of primal deity,  
 Dead, crushëd tombs of pale divinity,      55  
 Sepulchring your old glories! what is here
- [40] For us, so glorious once, but ceaseless wail  
 And clamour of woe, & chains & night & pain?  
 Lost as we are, & reft of the sweet light,  
 The joyous balminess of starry dews,      60  
 That pearl the wan face of maternal night,  
 [Page: 2b]
- [45] The Sun, that from his cloudy-skirted shrine  
 Fires all the unstarrëd sky with circling wheels,  
 The sweet moon, & the silence-hallowed calm  
 Of night ambrosial, & the air & seas—      65

[l. 30] *Hyperion*, II, 356: 'In pale and silver silence they remained'. For Keats's peculiar use of the word 'pale', see D. W. Rannie, *op. cit.* The word occurs sixty-two times in the poems.

[l. 33] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I, 226: 'Incumbent on the dusky air'.

[l. 33] *Hyperion*, II, 73.

[l. 37] *Hyperion*, I, 292: 'No, though a primeval God'. Swinburne's first reading, afterwards cancelled, was 'primeval'.

[l. 43] Joyous, balm, starry, dews (plural), are all typical of Keats's vocabulary.

[l. 47] 'calm'. A favourite word with Keats: used six times in *Hyperion*.

[l. 48] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5, 642: 'When ambrosial night with clouds'.

- These, reft from us, our lowest offspring, man,  
 [50] As glorified by shame, unworthy war  
     At hands immortal, & eternal loss,  
     Enjoy unmov'd; these have we lost; nor these  
     Alone, but anguished here soothe the dim night      70  
     That swathes us round, with moans, & wail, as now,  
 [55] Cowering; unworthy of these ancient seats,  
     Those calm shrines over the far-spherëd world  
     Where crown'd we sat on immemorial thrones!  
     Ah me, that we enslav'd should grovel so,      75  
     Forgetful how to strive, inglorious, base,  
 [60] Worthless redemption of our godheads lost!  
     My soul is bare of counsel; only this  
     I know, that I am weary of this yoke,  
     This sharp corrosive shame of fall & death,      80  
     And would arouse ye back to Heavenly thoughts,  
 [65] Worthy your ancient glories; let one speak  
     Wiser than I, whom following we may reign.

[Page 3a]

[Watermark: Edward Smith  
Quarto size]

He spoke; & calm amid the breathless hush

[l. 52] 'unmov'd'. The word is illegible in the manuscript, but 'unmov'd' is the probable reading.

[l. 56] 'shrines'. Cancelled reading: 'thrones'.

[l. 56] 'far-sphered'. *Fall of Hyperion*, I, 249. For the use of the word 'sphere' in Keats, and the latter's probable debt to Chapman, see Professor de Sélincourt: 'Appendix on the sources of Keats's vocabulary'.

[l. 61] *Hyperion*, I, 101: 'bare of its great diadem'.

[l. 63] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II, 401: 'these corrosive fires'.

[l. 67] 'calm'. See page 4b, note 1, also line 77.

[l. 67] 'breathless'. Often used by Keats, but not in *Hyperion*.

- [Grey Saturn rising spake with dreamy looks,  
Where dim philosophy slept vision'd faint:  
[70] Gods, that have died so long in deepening swoon  
Thro' this wild season of dejection,  
Swooning from fall to fall, blind & abased,  
Thro' cloud on cloud of sorrow and restless thought 90  
Unfathomable, alive to only woe;
- [75] Pale sorrows, wrestling with a stronger doom,  
Listen, & draw a solemn consolation  
From Truth, severe & sad, yet strong & calm.  
Thro' all the circling universe of life 95  
One inmost Power, unwearied, never sleeps
- [80] But circles ever thro' the lifeless deep  
Life warm & radiant; hence, when bright-eyed Spring  
Makes the green buds flush to their sunny core,  
The green life gushes thro' Earth's parched veins, 100  
And leaps out glorious into light, and fills
- [85] The music-trancéd air & thick-leaved boughs  
With sudden melody full-throated; nor .

[l. 68] *Hyperion*, II, 67: 'Sat gray-haired Saturn, silent as a stone'.

[l. 69] *Ode on Indolence*, 6, 8: 'And for the day faint visions there is store'.

[l. 72] *Hyperion*, II, 152: 'Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities'.

[l. 75] 'Pale'. See page 4a, note 4. See page 4b, note 1.

[l. 76] Used seven times in *Hyperion*.

[l. 77] *Hyperion*, II, 243: 'Receive the truth, and let it be your balm'.

[l. 79] *Hyperion*, III, 65: 'Unwearied ear of the whole Universe'.

[l. 81] 'radiant'. A favourite word with Milton.

[l. 81] 'bright-eyed'. This compound is used by Keats; compare also: 'fair-eyed', 'leaden-eyed', etc.

[l. 85] 'thick-leaved'. Keats: 'new-leaved', 'legend-leaved'.

[l. 86] *Nightingale*, I, 10.

Fails the smooth arching field of calmest blue,  
Which men call heaven, to rain from airy womb

105

[Page 3b]<sup>1</sup>

Sweet effluences and radiant; all the clouds

[90] Drop honey & balm-breathed dews from their fleeced skirts,  
On the fat earth, that laughs with flowers of light;  
And the world smiles out in existence new.

In the red bolted thunder roars & rends

110

This circulating power of self-born life,

[95] And smiles along the smooth, unfurrowed deep,  
Shrieks down the whirlwind, mutters in the storm,  
Grows with the growth of sunny-bosomed woods;  
Thrills the huge void with immortality,

115

And whirls for ever, changing life with life,

[100] Round the vast orb of being. Herein we lived,  
Throned in the unseen sky, or thundered out  
In glorious darkness, o'er the trembling world.

<sup>1</sup> The top of this page bears written upside down the following passage, from a speech by Anthonio in the first act of *The Loyal Servant* (see following pages and Introduction):

'horn beck and a rod of birch; and I will appoint for seconds 2 builders of raw youth, strippers and whippers by profession, to dub thy pagehood a knight of the red rod. C. [Cesario] Come boy, be not downcast, go with me (ex.).'

These fragments should be read in the contrary order to that of the poem: first fragment: pp. 6a-3b; second fragment: pp. 8a-7b; third fragment: pp. 12b-9b.

[l. 89] 'effluences'. Shelley or Milton; not used by Keats.

[l. 89] 'radiant'. See page 3a, line 81.

[l. 90] *Hyperion*, I, 208: 'slow-breathed melodies'.

[l. 96] 'storm'. Contracted reading: 'wind'.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Herein, & thrust by this vast hand of that  
Which men call Time, or Fate, or Chance, or God. 120

[105] Nameless and unresisted, tho' unknown  
We fell & newer glories took the place  
Of our Supreme; Think ye no inward will,  
Self-strong and self-created, wheels along  
Existence on its void & fathomless way?  
125

[110] Fools are we, this not knowing, that the same

Is Life & Destiny, nor without one  
Exists the other regent of itself:  
More fools indeed, would we now wrestle it down,      130  
But yielding in our inward power made strong,  
And smiling down the restless rule of Change;  
We shall be kings indeed & supreme gods,  
Sitting upon calm thrones of Knowledge, strong  
In perfect reason and matur'd peace  
Regal, unmoved, shall we for ever reign,  
And triumph in our being's perfectness. }  
So having said, back to his cloudy dreams  
Musing he dropt & ceasing husht the air,

[l. 109] *Endymion*, II, 272.

<sup>1</sup> 'Page. Let me do battle with him, good my lord. C[esar]. What, for blaspheming thine estate my boy? A[nthonio]. I do accept thy challenge, and nominate these for the armes; a . . .' (see page 3b, note 1).

[l. 117] 'calm'. See page 2b, line 47; also line 124.

[l. 118] 'maturëd'. Used by Shelley.

[l. 119] *Hyperion*, II, 372: 'Regal his shape majestic'.

[l. 12] 'cloudy'. Often used by Keats.

[l. 122] 'dropt'. Cancelled reading: 'stopt'.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

That trembled yet melodiously & full  
With the calm awful music of his words. 140

[125] To whom [Oceanus, with musing brow  
Thought-furrowed, rose, & thus with measur'd voice:

Well-framed & hallowed by serenest thought,  
As fits our Highest, hath the speech appear'd 145  
Of mightiest Saturn; nor to be by us

[130] Unheeded, nor unfruitfully & vain  
To moulder in oblivion's rust, but ye  
Or must resolve at once to lay down all

[Page 4b]<sup>1</sup>

Ye have called glories, & to build new thrones  
Of thought in secret places of the heart, 150

[135] Kings to yourselves, & sever'd from the world;  
Or frame deep counsel for recover'd rule,  
Or blindly dash, & break against high fate,  
Grasping at power; these seem your only helps, 155  
If helps so hazardous may wear such name;

[140] Yet see I, yet, a higher & wiser way,  
To free ourselves, & crown with glories old.  
Strike not against the rocky-based fate,  
Dream not beneath it, nurs'd in fancy alone 160  
And mystic thought; reign we apart indeed,

[l. 125] 'Oceanus', *Hyperion*, II, 75, 163, 245, 333.

<sup>1</sup> 'for a rod only and no other exercise, till his age be more riper; marry, some are rotten alreadie and will never be the better on't' (see page 4a, note 1).

[l. 136] Compare with the construction: 'So the two brothers with their murdered man' (*Isabella*, 27, 1).

[l. 142] *Hyperion*, II, 138: for my firm-based footstool'.

[145] Contented with what glory rounds us yet,  
 To live superior, & divine repose  
 Quaff, undisturb'd, yet kings where we may rule,  
 Unscath'd, unperil'd by devouring Time,  
 Or envious change with fettering serpent twine.)

165

[150] He spoke; & calm with quiet lips, & eyes  
 Scornful of pain or blind contention,  
 Sank back the grey god-sophist of the sea,  
 With serene look of wisdom satisfied,  
 Serene and mute in godlike changelessness.

170

[Page 5a]<sup>1</sup>[Watermark: Britannia on Throne  
Quarto size]

[155] But Cœus, rising like a shatter'd rock,  
 With swift & fierce contempt & eyes that gleam'd  
 Red light & hideous thro' the livid air,  
 Sprang up & shouted, with loud voice & hoarse  
 As winds that wrestle with the storm-chafed sea:

175

[160] Fair speech & measur'd craft, most worthy gods!  
 Crush'd as we are, fallen, mockt images  
 Of spurn'd divinity, the fragments lost

[l. 150] See page 2b, line 47.

[l. 152] Compare *Hyperion*, II, 167-70:

... 'and the God of the sea  
 Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
 But cogitation in his watery shades,  
 Arose, with locks not oozy, and began'.

<sup>1</sup> An[thonio]. 'I did once essay't; and thus by goodly advise, I after much endurance whipped him into some kind of humanity being a beest fit for . . .' (see page 4b, note 1).

[l. 155] 'Cœus'. *Hyperion*, II, 19.[l. 162] *Hyperion*, I, 12; III, 8.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

- And shatter'd, idols of an older world! 180
- Are we cast down beyond all scorn? does Fate
- [165] With not a thunder-frown of rousëd wrath  
But curvëd smile contemptuous, tread us down,  
And pass on careless? Rise, ye ancient gods!  
I boast no power of wreathing wily words 185  
In serpentine & mazy folds, & winding
- [170] A cloudy veil of dull philosophy  
About existing woe; are we yet kings?  
Gods, thronëd in the deep serene of rule?  
No, but fallen shadows in a world of scorn. 190
- What loud hymns of our worship here we ring
- [175] Up thro' the rich-curled smoke of incenst shrines?  
Who bows & trembles at our awful shrine
- [Page 5b]<sup>1</sup>  
With shuddering prayer & adoration prone?  
Rise, rise, & seize again your ancient rule! 195  
Or would ye die, & in the blind night swathed
- [180] Lie cold in senseless immortality,  
Not by annihilation wholly crush'd,

[l. 166] *Hyperion*, I, 351: 'Lifted his curved lids'.

[l. 169] 'serpentine'. Used by Milton.

[l. 169] 'mazy'. See page 1b, line 10.

[l. 170] 'cloudy'. See page 4a, line 121.

[l. 172] *Sonnet on Chapman's Homer*: 'Yet never did I breathe its pure serene'.

<sup>1</sup> 'doth drybeate my little wit with flowtes; I would you'l remember his chastening, and hee'll make a fine witt. Ces[ario] wouldst then bring up a page?' (see page 5a, note 1).

[l. 177] *Hyperion*, II, 49, 73, 'prone'. Swinburne's cancelled reading was 'bow'd'.

[l. 178] 'rule'. *Hyperion*, I, 165; II, 216.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

But dying, as far as gods can die? now choose,  
Fallen powers, for no other choice is left.

200

He ended; & a sudden clangour yell'd

- [185] From all the host, harsh braying, as the roar  
Of charging trumpets on the battle's verge  
When shrieks the air with shafts, & clashes round  
With clarions; nor less terror shook their foes;

205

As when old earth with windy wrestlings torn

- [190] Cleaves, & the deep void opens on the day,  
Shakes cities down & from her womb hurls out  
Huge fragments hurtling in the noisy air;  
No less a shudder thro' Olympus ran

210

Sudden, convulsing all the deities

- [195] With trembling & sick fear; Poseidon quak'd  
Pavilion'd with the green vault of his seas,  
That kept moan round him for their elder lord;  
In the sweet depth of Cyprus' sunniest glades

215

Haunted by woodland voices & gleaming shapes,

[Page 6a]<sup>1</sup>

[Watermark: Britannia on Throne  
Quarto size]

- [200] The fear took Cytherea, where she lay,

[l. 186] 'charging'. Swinburne's cancelled reading was 'clashing'.  
'verge'. Cancelled reading: 'edge'.

[l. 187] 'shrieks'. Cancelled reading: 'roars'.

[l. 191] 'down'. Cancelled reading: 'out'.

[l. 194] *Hyperion*, I, 262; II, 27; III, 129.

[l. 195] 'sick'. *Hyperion*, I, 189; II, 104, 288.

[l. 198] *Endymion*, I, 693: 'heaths and sunny glades'.

<sup>1</sup> 'and cheat the wiselier. Here is a little knave of your lordshippe's who [sic] I have tutor'd with verbal correction; but indeed he doth' (see page 5b, note 1).

[l. 200] 'Cytherea'. *Endymion*, II, 492; III, 918, 975.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

- Combing the heavy folds of lucent gold  
 That in thick tresses on the ivory droopt  
 Of her veil'd shoulders; not more terror quail'd      220  
 Her deity, when by the sea-built wall
- [205] She fronted Diomedes, and he came  
 With the tread of a whirlwind on her troops, & shook  
 Ilion; not less amaz'd she rose & fled,  
 Scattering her nymphs, & as she mounted fell      225  
 Flowers, all the children of the sunny earth,
- [210] Raining around her thick ambrosial showers,  
 Till at the feet of Zeus she fell, & hail'd  
 Her father; he scarce less hereat dismayed;  
 Hermes, tho' skilfullest in deep-woven wiles      230  
 Trembled, & loose in his hand the powerful wand
- [215] Slumbrous, lay useless; paler grew the light  
 Of Artemis' brow, & brighter Phœbus paus'd,  
 One white hand resting on the golden strings  
 Of his hush'd lyre, that under it throbbed yet;      235  
 Stern Mars, dark-smiling, graspt his hilt, & frown'd,
- [220] Blackening the furrows of his war-wrinkled face;  
 From Bacchus' bright locks the ivy cluster'd fell;

[l. 201] 'Combing'. Cancelled reading: 'Soothing'.

[l. 201] 'lucent'. *Hyperion*, I, 239: 'of all my lucent empire'; also: *Paradise Lost*, III, 589.

[l. 205] 'and'. Cancelled reading: 'when'.

[l. 210] See page 2b, line 48.

[l. 214] 'the powerful'. Cancelled reading: 'his'.

[l. 215] *Hyperion*, I, 69: 'thus violate thy slumbrous solitude'.

[l. 215] 'paler'. See page 2a, line 30.

[l. 221] 'the ivy cluster'd fell'. Cancelled reading: 'fell the cluster'd vines'.

[Page 6b]

- And Pallas only was not pale, but calm  
 Sat statue-like among the trembling gods;                           240  
 Deep thought lay clear & cloudless on her brow.
- [225] Then Zeus, with high words vailing hidden fear,  
 Spake, & the clouds shook into thunder far:  
 There is no fear; are we as men, or fall'n  
 Unscepter'd gods, unkingdom'd and abased,                           245  
 That fear should thrill our veins? Reign we not here
- [230] Serene among the sunny clouds of Heaven?  
 If yet gigantic wrath upon the earth  
 Writhe impotent, & mutter & toss & threat,  
 ✓ What fear we? are they not by supreme fate                           250  
 Our subjects, & we in our thunder kings?)
- [235] He spake threatening, & scorn his proud lip curv'd  
 Kinglike; yet scarce they whispered scar'd applause.  
 But queenly Pallas with unruffled look,  
 As when in Academic groves she met                                   255  
 Deep-thoughted Plato, or the reverend head
- [240] Of Socrates, or likest when she chid  
 The wrath of war-vext Mars at Ilion, spake  
 With slow melodious voice; 'It is not well

[l. 224] 'cloudless'. Cancelled reading: 'serene'.

[l. 228] *Hyperion*, I, 19 : 'Unsceptred and his realmless eyes were closed'.

[l. 230] 'sunny'. See page 5b, line 198.

[l. 231] 'gigantic'. *Paradise Lost*, XI, 659.

[l. 235] 'curv'd'. See page 5a, line 166.

[l. 237] 'unruffled'. Cancelled reading: 'calm-thoughted'.

[l. 239] *Lamia*, II, 115: 'high-thoughted'.[l. 242] 'melodious'. *Hyperion*, III, 181.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

[Page 7a]

[Watermark: Britannia on Throne  
Quarto size]

That thus we talk loud thunder & weak rule, 260

And clothe in lightning our so powerless hands;

[245] [For strength is weakness without wisdom, rais'd  
By her alone to highest calm of power,

Strong as a mountain's blue cloud-wreathed head

Serene, above the murmuring din of earth,

Nor else serene nor mighty.] Thou art king,

[250] [O Zeus, the thronéd thunder shrines thee round;

Bright brows immortal droop before thy might,

Thy hand is strong with sceptre; men on earth

Mount up to thee their prayers in steaming clouds

270

Of incense, & the reek of slaughter'd herds;

[255] [But thou, God as thou art, must lean thyself

On wisdom's sceptred hand, to rule indeed,

(Nor king nor god else; & alleging Fate

That, we unmovéd from our awful seats,

275

Will work her work, thou arrest;) not for us

[260] [She works, nor we her dim foundations know

Nor ordinances; seizing the swift time

We rule by wisdom and justice unmoved;

Else what strength of command we bring, jars back 280

[l. 243] 'rule'. See page 5b, line 178.

[l. 244] 'powerless'. Cancelled reading: 'unruling'.

[l. 246] 'calm'. See page 2b, line 47.

[l. 247] 'I stood tip-toe', 140: 'Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd and curl'd'.

[l. 248] 'Serene'. See page 5a, line 172.

[l. 263] *Hyperion*, I, 200: 'When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers'.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Upon ourselves, and hurls us headlong down.

[Page 7b]<sup>1</sup>

- [265] She ended fearless; but no less a death  
Of stony silence spelled the Olympian crew;  
As some worn voyager from shores remote,  
Where the calm sun sleeps on the western verge      285  
Of utmost sea, slumbering with level rays
- [270] Where in the summer sunset ever dream  
His woodland race; landing on some lone beach  
Thro' tropic shades of giant verdure wide  
And alleys deep, with huge magnolia archt,      290  
Odorous, long wanders thro' the perfum'd eve,
- [275] Till in the dewy dusk a city gleams,  
Her humbler towers & bastioned walls in night,  
But on her topmost pinnacles the sun  
Sits, turrets that flame back his western rays      295  
From towering gold & domes of diamond-glare;

[l. 264] See *Hyperion*, II, 364. See also Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II, 374, 'hurled headlong to partake with us'.

<sup>1</sup> 'He's but a foole that will be friends with knavery. Ces[ario]. Call'st thou thyself a knave? An[tonio]. I make profession on't, sir' (see page 8a, note 1).

[l. 266] 'Stony'. Common in Milton and Shelley.

[l. 268] 'the western'. Cancelled reading: 'his'—for 'calm', see page 2b: line 47.

[l. 269] 'utmost'. Miltonic use.

[l. 272] 'tropic'. *Paradise Lost*, X, 675.

[l. 274] 'Odorous'. Common in Keats.

[l. 275] *Hyperion*, I, 264: 'full six dewy hours'.

[l. 275] 'city'. Cancelled reading: 'giant city'.

[l. 276] *Hyperion*, I, 177: 'Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold'.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

[280] With hope amaz'd the inlaid gates he passes  
 Wide gaping to the twilight landskip dim;  
 Palace on palace, dome on shining dome,  
 Rises and arches o'er the dusky streets  
 With bridges of gold & stately statues wrought,

300

[285] And many a pile of grey magnificence  
 O'er the broad silent ways, curiously wrought

[Page 8a]<sup>1</sup>[Watermark: Britannia on Throne  
Quarto size]

Cornice and buttress, pillars and architrave;

All stony silent as the sleeping times,

305

Unstirred by human breath; he gazes maz'd,

[290] Till him too the cold petrifying night  
 Clasps & he stands mute in those dusky streets,  
 A statue among statues, wrought to life;  
 Nor ever voice breaks the silence of death.

310

No less dead-silent stood the throng amaz'd,

[295] And Fear first trembled thro' the deep of heaven.

[l. 280] 'inlaid'. Cancelled reading: 'brazen'.

[l. 281] 'landskip'. Milton, *Allegro*, 70.

[l. 285] *Fall of Hyperion*, I, 67: 'Of grey cathedral, buttressed walls, rent towers'; and *Hyperion*, I, 211: 'That inlet to severe magnificence'.

<sup>1</sup> An[thonio]. "Twill be the first of wisdom thou hast heard then. Ces[a]rio]. Dost rayle at me? I would be friends with thee' (see page 9b, note 1).

[l. 287] 'buttress'. See page 7b, line 285.

[l. 287] 'architrave'. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I, 715 (see page 9b, note 1).

[l. 288] 'stony'. See page 7b, line 266.

[l. 291] *Lamia*, I, 361: 'Of some arch'd temple-door or dusky colonnade'; *Hyperion*, II, 56: 'dusky face'. See also below: Book II, line 10: 'dusky cheek'.

[l. 293] This magnificent architectural metaphor is directly, though not slavishly inspired from the first book of *Hyperion*, 176-80:

corners & ledges, pillows & cushions,  
All story-silent as the sleeping brain. 905  
Unstirred by human breath, big eyes unaid,  
Till him too the cold petrifying night  
Shaps, & he stands mute in those dusky streets,  
Isolated among statues, wrought to life;  
Nor ever voice breaks the silent of death. 910  
No less dead-silent stood the throng amaz'd,  
And fear first trembled thro' the deep of heaven. 915.

Book II.

Meanwhile amid their night the Titans cheered  
Took counsel & with deep thought were then very  
To light & power & aid & glories best.  
At length amid the crowd a shape arose,  
Huge as some column by successive fangs  
Hung from its bole, that pierc'd with rank weeds,  
Lies with its shatter'd blazon, hugest he  
Of all the giant race, & strongest of them all.  
Hyperion, on his broad brow pride repos'd  
Beneath, in each furrow of his dark cheek  
War harbour'd, born with anger at one birth,  
From twin, but dearest to that grisly shape



## BOOK II

Meanwhile amid their night the Titans cheer'd,  
 Took counsel & with deep thought wove their way  
 To light & power renew'd & glories lost.

At length amid the crowd a shape arose,

- [5] Huge as some column by convulsive pang  
 Flung from its base, that o'ergrown with rank weeds,  
 Lies with its shatter'd blazon; hugest he  
 Of all the giant race, & strongest of limb,  
 [Porphyron; on his broad brow pride repos'd  
 [10] Secure, & in each furrow of his dusk cheek

'His palace bright  
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,  
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
 Glar'd a blood red through all its thousand courts,  
 Arches and domes and fiery galleries.'

194-195:

'He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease  
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall'

217-224:

'From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault; . . .  
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades  
 Until he reached the great main cupola;  
 There standing fierce beneath he stamp't his foot  
 And from the basements deep to the high towers  
 Jarr'd his own golden region.'

Keats and Swinburne are both more Miltonic than Milton.

[l. 1] *Hyperion*, I, 150; 'this cheers our fallen house'.

[l. 9] 'Porphyron'. *Hyperion*, II, 20.

[l. 10] 'Secure'. Cancelled reading: 'confident'.

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

War harbour'd, born with Anger at one birth,  
Grim twins, but dearest to that grisly shape

[Page 8b]

Towering with haughty port; & thus he spake  
With voice to quell the thunder, & make shrink

[15] Its bolts inaudible, & hand to hurl  
The baffled lightning strong, or dash down towers.

Titans, the strongest brood of mighty earth,  
Short counsel shall make shortest pain too long;  
War, war our subject, war our minister,

[20] Sits dreadfully upon the lowering clouds  
Glaring reluctant patience, till at length  
With signal given, her red hand may launch  
Death; rise & war, & dash down fear & fate,  
Mighty to act, not suffer, but revenge.

[25] Destiny shall quake before us, giving way  
To our high-battled storm, & we shall reign  
Kings by our might, & crush our vaunting foes,  
Our puny children, & this rebel Zeus,  
A baby tyrant, nurs'd & bred of us,

[30] Puppet of sovereignty, that has caught up  
High words of supreme rule, & mimics them  
With his mock-action, playing the prime king.  
Chief minister of fate & sovereign he  
Of us, his race ancestral! struts and mouths,

[l. 12] Milton: 'grisly spectres', etc.

[l. 17] Keats, Milton, Mammoth brood, giant brood.

[l. 21] 'reluctant'. *Hyperion*, I, 61.

[l. 28] 'puny'. *Hyperion*, II, 331.

[l. 34] 'ancestral'. *Isabella*, I4, 2.

## SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

[Page 9a]

[Watermark: Edward Smith  
Quarto size]

- [35] With infant courage & ignoble act,  
 And we before this god of puppets quail!  
 Back to your thrones in thunder! Titans, back!  
 Rise, Saturn! war & triumph, godlike war!  
 And death herald us back unto our thrones.
- [40] So closed his words, hot with the breath of war,  
 And measur'd thunder echo'd far applause.  
 But now the sagest of the fallen gods,  
 Sagest & deepest skill'd in world-wide lore  
 Ancestral, & benignest in his might,
- [45] The son of Themis, else all-nurturing earth,  
 Prometheus rose; for not yet his bold hand  
 Had thro' the hollow reed to man convey'd,  
 To blind weak man, the golden light of fire;  
 Nor had Pandora, blushing perfect grace,
- [50] From his wise breast repulst, his brother lur'd  
 Unwiser, by bland arts & heaven-deckt wiles;  
 Nor he rock-fixt groan'd to the reddening beak  
 And curvèd claw of Jove's strong bird, whom late  
 Alcides, mightiest among later men,
- [55] Slew & releast him fetter'd; but now young

[l. 43] 'lore'. *Hyperion*, I, 33; II, 148, 333.

[l. 44] 'ancestral'. See page 8b, line 34.

[l. 44] 'benignest'. *Hyperion*, I, 108; III, 95.[l. 45] 'Themis'. *Hyperion*, II, 77.

[l. 45] 'all-nurturing'. Compare Shelley: 'all-feeding, all-devouring, all-beholding', etc.

[l. 46] 'Prometheus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

[l. 53] 'curvèd'. See page 5a, line 166.

Full of deep thought & counsel he stood up

[Page 9b]<sup>1</sup>

In that grim conclave, & sage speech began  
Unfolding slow his universal lore;  
Fate, & the mighty all instinctive will,

- [60] The mystery that lives in all things, power  
By which earth lives, as Saturn first had shown;  
Then sager, (Fate permitting, how to rule,  
However, not by brutal strength, & force,  
Of limb & muscle or thunder-throated war;

- [65] But by deep thought inwov'n and subtlest craft)  
Hard to unravel, intellectual might  
Strongest of things & best, thence godlike life  
And rule primeval; & more subtle & wise,  
Deep thro' the folds of nature's secrecy

- [70] Piercing swift wisdom, & counsel drawing up  
Of noble craft; (but they, blind shapes of strength,  
Rude & hard-thoughted, helming to all winds,

<sup>1</sup> 'CES[ARIO]. Sir, let me be acquainted with your wisenesse  
You are a goodly tutor for a king.'

(See page 10a, note 1, etc.)

[l. 57] 'conclave'. *Fall of Hyperion*, I, 50; also *Paradise Lost*, I, 295.

[l. 58] 'lore'. See page 9a, line 43.

[l. 59] Compare Shelley: 'all-creative', etc.

[l. 64] 'or'. Cancelled reading: 'and'.

[l. 64] 'thunder-throated'. See page 3a, line 86.

[l. 65] The manuscript is here almost impossible to read; 'inwov'n' seems however the best conjecture.

[l. 68] 'rule'. See page 5b, line 178.

[l. 68] 'primeval'. See page 2a, line 37.

[l. 69] 'folds'. Cancelled reading: 'depths'.

[l. 72] 'hard-thoughted'. See page 6b, line 239.

But bare of counsel & internal strength,  
With storm of scorn & whirlwind ignorance

- [75] Stifled his voice, & their tempestuous din  
Drove him away, whence evil to themselves,  
Nor of his noblest wisdom good to him,  
So slighted is supreme Philosophy )

[Page 10a]<sup>1</sup>

[Watermark: 1846  
Quarto size]

Wisdom divine & virtue, but itself

- [80] Strong, living to itself for glorious ends.

Next to the warlike throng rose high & broad

Of giant bulk & port imperial, one

Not lightning-blasted yet, Rhætus, of brow

Majestic; more of counsel, tho' but shallow

- [85] And scatter'd by the blowing breath of fight,  
Sat on his brow, than on the broad smooth strength  
Of huge Porphyron's; neither sage, but this  
Of warlike counsel best, small praise, where war  
So impotent; and thus far echoing spake

- [90] With deeper voice, but not so hoarse & said:  
O Titans, well ye have devis'd, & well

[l. 73] 'bare of'. See page 2b, line 61.

[l. 74] Sonnet to Homer: 'giant ignorance'; also *Hyperion*, III, 107.

[l. 75] 'tempestuous'. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I, 77.

<sup>1</sup> 'DUKE. He who knows

What are his flatterers, honoureth his foes.

Thou shalt take service with me; by and by

Ile hear thee further speak

(*Exit*).'

(See page 10b, note 1.)

[l. 83] 'Rhætus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

[l. 84] Milton, *Paradise Regained*, II, 216; 'majestic brow', etc.

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Counsell'd, ignoble sloth & dreaming thought  
Driving far from ye, & to glorious war  
Worthily inclin'd; but not enough devis'd

- [95] For perfect rule & conquest, unfulfill'd;  
Since those, be sure, who our primeval strength  
Have grapt with younger hands, not without power  
Establisht, & strong counsel thus sustained;  
For who shall say, that by ignoble strength
- [100] And puny tyranny vanquisht we fell,

[Page 10b]<sup>1</sup>

Primeval gods, & nature's mightiest? no;  
Else our own words, both what we speak, or do,  
Debases us beyond all scorn, thus sham'd  
And grovelling beneath an infant arm.

- [105] Power then is theirs; but to contend with power  
An equal strength requires; whence then to us  
This strength, that may renew our glories lost?  
This to your judgments would I clearly unfold.  
And first, whereas these sophists of deity,
- [110] Knitting close words in cloudy mysteries, prate

[l. 95] 'rule'. See page 5b, line 178.

[l. 96] 'primeval'. See page 2a, line 37.

[l. 99] 'ignoble'. Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

[l. 100] 'puny'. See page 8b, line 28.

<sup>1</sup> 'Know me already for a sullen rayler  
Whose bitter breath doth flowte at courtlinesse,  
And discontent emblazon'.

(See page 11a, note 1.)

[l. 101] 'primeval'. See page 2a, line 37.

[l. 109] 'sophists'. See page 4b, line 152.

[l. 110] 'cloudy'. See page 4a, line 121; compare the 'cloudy trophies' of the *Ode to Melancholy*.

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Of Power or Destiny supreme, that folds  
 The orbēd world & whirls along its course,  
 Working to the end all good, & to its end  
 Calm-travelling; lo, what shatter'd shapes of woe

- [115] Here front our eyes, & darken this dim light!  
 Call ye this Destiny's wide-reaching work!  
 Fools, what but tyrant power & present rule  
 Insufferable, such evils works? behold,  
 Our brethren here, by us in counsel lost

- [120] Lie undeliver'd, groaning in their bonds:  
 Typhœus here, the mightiest Titan, writhes  
 Upon a bed of thorny pain & fire,

[Page 11a]<sup>1</sup>

[Watermark: Fellows  
 Quarto size]

And groans from his deep chest reluctant flame,  
 Fruitless; here Tityus the fell vulture tears

- [125] Pressing with ponderous bulk the groaning soil;  
 There Tantalus, rackt by devouring thirst  
 And keen-edged hunger, parches in the stream,  
 Panting, & views the cool dark wave beneath,

[l. 112] *Hyperion*, I, 166: 'Blazing Hyperion on his orbed fire'.

[l. 118] 'Insufferable'. Shelley, *Prometheus*, III, I, 137.

[l. 121] 'Typhœus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

[l. 122] 'thorny'. Common in Keats.

<sup>1</sup> 'Wilt dwell within my court? Anth[onio]. Who cannot flatter  
 A court abhors; these gentlemen of yours, sir'

(See page 11b, note 1.)

[l. 123] 'reluctant'. See page 8b, line 21.

[l. 123] 'flame'. Cancelled reading: 'fire'.

[l. 124] 'Tityus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

[l. 126] 'Tantalus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

And pendent fruits ambrosial; there another,

- [130] Tied on the sharp rim of that jagged wheel  
 That grinds thro' him to the earth, then jarring whirls  
 Mangled aloft; & this by newer gods  
 Done, while we sleep, or strive in fruitless war;  
 Is this then happiness? this guiding fate?

- [135] The work, rather, of short liv'd tyranny  
 Convulsed now with the last pang of fear,  
 To prop its perishing rule; nor knows how strength  
 Hence springs to us against them; loose we these,  
 Pale victims of a rule so swift to crime,  
 [140] That in such little space so much hath done  
 Of evil, & for such slight cause alledg'd; [sic]  
 One, that he slew his son to feasting gods,  
 Type of no gentle sway, & sacrifice  
 Pleasant to our new tyrants, & for this

[Page 11b]<sup>1</sup>

- [145] One anguish by another recompencet;  
 See at their hands his guerdon; the other too,

[l. 129] 'pendent'. *Fall of Hyperion*, I, 198, 220; also Milton.

[l. 129] 'ambrosial'. See page 2b, line 48.

[l. 130] 'jagged'. See page 1b, line 2.

[l. 136] 'convulsed'. See page 5b, line 194.

[l. 139] 'pale'. See page 2a, line 30.

[l. 142] 'One'. Tantalus.

<sup>1</sup> 'Fortune not generous; and whoever clung  
 To his dead hopes that fell to make me duke  
 I honour as the blood that feeds my lyfe.'

(See page 11a, note 1.)

[l. 145] 'recompencet'. *Paradise Lost*, X, 1052; XII, 495.

[l. 146] Ixion. The reference is to the false Juno which Zeus fashioned with clouds to deceive the unfortunate Titan.

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Accus'd that he, with touch audacious, late  
Dar'd strive to taint the queen august of heaven  
Rather their will's lost prey, & hapless wreck

- [150] Of this upstarted deity's lips & eyes  
Libidinous; fair cause for hideous pain,  
Shatter'd for ever in each mangled joint!  
These aiding, who have known their tyrannous yoke,  
We shall pluck down these upstarts, & again  
[155] Reign, crown'd by war. Ye have heard my sentence, gods.

They heard, & they applauded. Erebus,  
Shook from its darkest depths & all the night  
Shudder'd; back Tartarus with reluctant speed  
Trembled & shrunk & cast its inmates out;

- [160] A groan of thunder shiver'd thro' the dark:  
Moan'd all the shades, & all the gloomy vales  
Of Hades felt a sudden thrill of pain.  
Such power, tho' fall'n, was in those early gods,  
Not yet by thunder blasted & the bolts

- [165] Of Zeus, nor chain'd, tho' ill they sped in war,  
Yet 'scaping, free of fetters & the doom

[Page 12a]

[Watermark: 1849  
Quarto size]

At last pronounc't; they rose; & each with step  
Not slow, & hand speedy to answer will,  
Loos't all the tortur'd; so the wily words

- [170] Of Rhœtus counselling war, & arguments vain,

[l. 155] 'sentence'. Cancelled reading: 'counsel, gods'.

[l. 158] 'reluctant'. See page 8b, line 21.

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Excusing with false glosses blackest sin,  
And spreading covert veil of glozing words,  
Wrought with them, easily counsell'd to their bane.  
Leapt all the impious into sudden joy;

- [175] Free of their galling yoke & festering pain,  
They triumphed, & in new delight of strength  
And satisfied desire of torturous days,  
Exulted, running, springing blithe & light  
With tread elastic, & new freedom quafft

- [180] Delightful, such the joy of pain releast!  
Long, long the wither'd throat of Tantalus  
With fiery drought inflam'd the waters cold  
Of icy Lethe bathed with pleasant draught  
Sweeter than Bacchus' bubbling purple e'er

- [185] To wearied reveller, nor brought his soul  
Sane pain's oblivion. Pleasure yet remain'd,  
And glad revenge; Pentheus & Tityus there  
Free of their pain, fresh thoughts of godless pride,  
Swelling conceive, puft with vainglorious joy.

- [190] Ixion, freed now from the resting wheel,

[l. 171] 'glosses'. Milton uses the word; Keats also has it once in each of his plays.

[l. 174] 'impious'. The word clearly belongs to the vocabulary of *Paradise Lost*, although Milton does not use it as a noun; it occurs in Keats, but not once in *Hyperion*; this single word would turn Keats's pagan attitude into a puritanical one.

[l. 182] 'fiery'. See page 1b, line 3.

[l. 183] 'icy'. *Hyperion*, I, 201.

[l. 183] 'bathed with pleasant draught'. Cancelled reading: 'watered with sweet draught'.

[l. 189] 'vainglorious'. *Paradise Lost*, VI, 384.

[l. 190] 'Ixion'. *Hyperion*, I, 130.

[Page 12b]<sup>1</sup>

Stretches his limbs, now whole & eas'd of pain,  
 On the hard earth, to him delicious bed,  
 With rest more sweet, than what the broider'd couch  
 Of Melibæan purple lends to kings

- [195] On downy plumes luxurious; Sisyphus  
 Sleeps, & sweet dreams repay his aching toil,  
 Since now lies still the ever-rolling stone.  
 All joy'd, all impious, none repented, none  
 But freed of pain fresh crime began to weave

- [200] Fuller destruction drawing on their heads  
 With lavish hand outpour'd; such the fell power  
 Of Tartarus, sin-breathing air & foule,  
 Then war propos'd against the younger gods  
 Gladly they seis'd, and with resounding note

- [205] The brazen trumpets screamed war to the sky.  
 Standards unfurl'd & clash of bristling arms  
 Were none; strong in themselves they stood, & war  
 Devis'd unfearing; then in serried force  
 Huge shapes towering, a rocky fence of war

<sup>1</sup> 'D[UKE]. Thy speech is faire;  
 And smacks of something nobler than thy having.  
 I would have such my friends, whose faith unflaw'd'

(See page 11b, note 1.)

[l. 194] 'Melibæan'. *Paradise Lost*, II, 242.

[l. 195] 'luxurious, etc.'. Keatsian vocabulary.

[l. 195] 'Sisyphus'. Not mentioned by Keats.

[l. 198] 'impious'. See page 12a, line 174.

[l. 202] The compound 'calm-breathing' occurs in Keats (*Ode to Psyche*).

[l. 204] 'resounding'. Occurs in Milton.

[l. 208] 'serried'. *Paradise Lost*, I, 548; VI, 599.

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

- [210] Against the sun, tho' with their wiser king  
Reluctant, forth they sallied; swung behind  
[212] Hell's gates revolv'd with hideous clangour clos'd.

[l. 211] 'reluctant'. See page 8b, line 21.

[l. 212] 'revolv'd'. *Paradise Lost*, VII, 381.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

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THE manuscript of this poem was once in the possession of Mr. T. J. Wise; but I have failed to find any trace of it in his collection, and the text which follows has been printed from a typescript which Mr. Wise had had taken from the manuscript some years ago. The first page of this copy contains the 45 lines which I print. The next pages supply instead of the expected continuation 174 lines of an obscure mythological poem which deals apparently with Apollo and Daphne. The typist must have exactly reproduced the manuscript which seems to have been made up of two imperfect poems.

In this poem—which cannot be dated with precision but which belongs to the Oxford period—we see the young Swinburne no longer apprenticed to Keats but trying to compete with him with arms of his own choosing. I have no intention to compare this juvenile effusion with Keats's immortal *Ode*, but it will be allowed that Swinburne's attempt in its rough irregularity achieves effects of breathless enthusiasm and intensity of passion which, of course, Keats never aimed at producing.

The poem is, moreover, interesting as an early expression of Swinburne's admiration for the Song of the Nightingale which he identifies with Sappho's lyrical inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne's enthusiasm for Sappho was not, as H. Nicolson too lightly asserts, a matter of pure rhetoric. He found in the Sapphic fragments and tradition a kind of burning, unsatisfied inspiration, which he felt as strongly akin to his own: Sappho is a kindred spirit ('As brother and sister were we'). Many lines in *Anactoria* are spoken in the poet's own name:

association between the two songs (which is based on one of the sapphic fragments) is constant with Swinburne, and is frequently referred to, both in prose and verse; but this curious theory—for it cannot otherwise be termed—finds its extreme form in the *Dedicatory Epistle to the collected Poems* (pp. xx-xxi) and chiefly in the poem *On the Cliffs* (composed 1879—published in *Songs of the Springtides*).

I am fortunate in being able to quote from an unpublished letter<sup>1</sup> addressed by Swinburne to Watts-Dunton in 1879, after the completion of *On the Cliffs*, a passage which throws light both on Swinburne's attitude and on the poem I publish below:

[1879] I have a new poem to read you [*On the Cliffs*] longer (I will not say better, whether I think so or not) than any (except the ever edifying *Dolores*) in either of my collections . . . I fear there is not over-much hope of a fresh scandal and consequent “succès de scandale” from a mere rhapsody just 4 lines short of 400 (oddly enough) on the song of a nightingale by the sea-side. I don't think I ever told you, did I? my anti-Ovidian theory as to the real personality of that much misrepresented bird—the truth concerning whom dawned upon me one day in my midsummer school holidays,<sup>2</sup> when it flashed on me listening quite

‘Alas that neither moon nor snow nor dew  
Nor all cold things can purge me wholly through’, etc.

Nor are we to forget that, in his great unpublished novel, he named the heroine *Lesbia*.

<sup>1</sup> In the collection of T. J. Wise.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Sappho—because I have known thee and loved, hast thou  
None other answer now?’

As brother and sister were we, child and bird,

## THE NIGHTINGALE

suddenly (1) that this was not Philomela (2) in the same instant who this was. It is no theory, but a fact, as I can prove by the science of notation.'

The fragment which I print to-day is nothing but the contemporary—or almost contemporary—record of this youthful experience.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

---

THRO' the thick throbings of her trembling throat,  
Half stifled with its music, struggling gush'd  
The torrent-tide of song, then free burst out  
And in a tempest whirl of melody rush'd  
Thro' the stirred boughs. The young leaves on the trees  
Flutter'd, as in a storm, to that harmonious breeze.  
It floated now serenely, sweet of breath,  
As with full conscious beauty now content,  
Now shivered into dim delicious death,  
Dash'd down a precipice of music, rent  
By the mad stream of song; whirl'd, shook, rang out, spoke,  
Stunning the charmed night with long melodies,  
Then in a thousand gurgling eddies flew  
Of whirlwind sweetness, lost in its own sound,  
Since thy first Lesbian word  
Flamed on me, and I knew not whence I knew  
This was the song that struck my whole soul through,  
Pierced my keen spirit of sense with edge more keen,  
Even when I knew not,—even ere sooth were seen,—  
When thou wast but the tawny sweet-winged thing  
Whose cry was but of spring.'

(On the Cliffs (composed 1879)—*Songs of the Springtides.*)

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

As eddying winds of autumn when they blew,  
Caught the sere leaves and hurried round and round,  
So her rich notes tumultuous panted she,  
Then into fitful peace dropt down harmoniously.

Hark! now they storm again and whirl along  
Swift passion; strange, passion should be so sweet!  
What stings thee madly into sudden song,

O nightingale? What joy or grief is meet  
To father such delight? Some say for ever  
Thy wild strain blindly maddens down grief's passion-river;  
Others, that with fierce joy intoxicate

Thou variest in sweet labyrinthine maze  
A wild delight of thy rich woodland state

Alone among green leaves, where softly plays  
Thy trembling wooer, Zephyr; whatsoe'er  
No grief or joy of ours was ever yet so fair.  
Never but once did mortal fire of passion

Such a fierce sweetness thrill, when she who died  
Whirl'd by a storm of love and indignation

From dusk Leucadia's rock, her poet pride  
Mastering wild love, rung out her burning song  
To Lemnos' shades and seas, her laurell'd troop among.  
Never was sorrow half so full of joy,

Never was joy so like her sister sorrow;  
Yet twins they are, and to the nearing eye  
Alike inseparable, so one doth borrow  
The other's eyes to look more beautiful,  
And both with mingled voice thy cup of song make full.  
Sing on! thou singest as in early times

To Thracian forests in the accursed shade;  
Sing on: thou singest as of early crimes. . . .

**SONG**





## SONG

---

THIS poem occupies the last three pages<sup>1</sup> of two leaves of white ruled paper, quarto size, measuring  $7\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  inches; the watermark is 'Fellows'. The paper is, therefore, found to be identical with that of the manuscript of Swinburne's *Hyperion*, and it is highly probable that both poems were composed at about the same period, i.e. 1859–60.

The inspiration and the diction of this love-song recall Shelley far more than Keats, and the connection with the *Lines to an Indian air* (*I arise from dreams of thee*) seems evident:

'The wandering airs they faint  
On the dark silent stream.  
The champak odours fail  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
The nightingale's complaint,  
It dies upon her heart,  
As I must die on thine,  
Belovèd as thou art.'

But the metre is reminiscent of the opening and the close of Keats's *Ode to Sorrow* (*Endymion*, IV, 146, etc.):

'O sorrow  
Why dost borrow

<sup>1</sup> The first page supplies a blank verse fragment of about eighteen lines ('O thou all-bearing mother', etc.).

S W I N B U R N E ' S   H Y P E R I O N

The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?  
To give at evening pale  
Unto the nightingale  
That thou mayst listen the cold dews among?"

The couplet after the 9th stanza suggests that the song is heard by the poet who does not speak in his own name.

SONG

---

O LOVE! sole wingèd power,  
When is thy dearest hour?  
Or in what shapes of dreams best love we thee?  
Whisper'd at cool twilight,  
Or mid the dews of night,  
At moonlight greetings by a summer sea?  
  
The roses, eagerly,  
Flush into life, and die  
When they have crowned the rich air with their sweetness,  
Even so, Belovèd, I  
Could be content to die,  
Pouring into thy heart my love's completeness.

Heart, body, soul, I reel  
Soon as thy voice I feel  
Coming upon mine ears; or step, too light  
To hurt the daisy's head  
With any bruising tread,  
As thou steal'st on through the enamour'd night.

S O N G

My brain swims into fire  
My spirit's fierce desire  
Quails in the throbbing cells of my wild heart.  
O let me leap to death  
Dying, my life to breathe  
Upon thy lips, struck thro' with joy's sharp dart!

An altar-offering  
To Love, supremest king,  
When in thy arms crowned with all bliss I lie!  
How perfect were delight  
If in that perfect light  
Of love, my dazzled eyes might shut and die!

O Love, O fiery might,  
Our weaker mortal sight  
Faints down before thee, all our life turns pale;  
And in one sudden throe  
Of joy like sharpest woe  
The burning spirits wither up and quail.

A sphere of dizzy glare  
Earth reels thro' blinding air  
Wavering, and all things stagger in my dazzled sight;  
And far and faint above  
Beat the bright wings of love  
As music trembles thro' their living light.

I swoon as lilies do  
When the sun fires their dew

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

And drinks the morning from their folded leaves;  
As swoons the acacia flower  
Dead o'er the sun-dried bower,  
When faint with heat tann'd labourers bind the sheaves.

Then out of that strange light  
My soul reels into night,  
When thou art gone, and earth turns black and cold;  
And in that sudden ill  
My heart shrinks sere and chill,  
As withered flowers dropt on a barren wold.

The strange voice faded into trembling peace;  
Then rose again but sad as funeral harmonies.

And then I cannot see,  
For light is gone from me  
I am aweary of the earth and sky;  
Lying so far above;  
Mine only, my own love  
I cannot see thee. Pity, let me die!

Die lovely and unseen  
Deep in the forest green,  
Far from all voices and unpitying eyes!  
Even as a wounded fawn  
Cowering along the lawn,  
Creeps slowly into some lone brake and dies!

**EPICURUS**

---



## EPICURUS.

---

THIS poem occupies the first three pages of two leaves of white ruled paper, quarto size, bearing the watermark: 'Edwin Smith'; the paper being thus identical with that of the manuscript of *Swinburne's Hyperion*. The lines seem to be a half-didactic, half-lyrical exposition of Epicurus' doctrine and is strongly reminiscent of the *De Rerum Natura*. It should be noted that Swinburne's metaphysics are on the whole similar to those of Lucretius, and this poem, Epicurean though it may purport to be, is interesting as an early and violent expression of its author's life-long antitheism.

The diction and style are often similar to Keats's, and the whole recalls the speech of Oceanus in *Swinburne's Hyperion*. This is borne out by the presence of words like: *calm-throned, lofty-shrined, high-thoughted, serene, bale*; while such lines as:

'And Memory her quiet evening-star'  
or:

'Begotten of the air on phantasy'  
speak for themselves.

## EPICURUS

---

IT is not in the hot and hurrying strife  
Of million feet fast thundering to the goal,  
Nor in the clamorous triumph shouts which roll

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

About the toil and pain, that dwells true life.  
Cal-thronèd in the inmost fane of thought,  
Quiet and sunny as the summer air  
That sleeps on woody glens and mountains bare  
Alike, she sits; and there the soul is taught  
To know herself, to know and learn of time,  
And Hope, the planet smiling on her prime,  
And Memory, her quiet evening-star.  
Too lofty-shrined for shock of earthly war  
That thunder-shakes the restless world beneath,  
She sits, her head veiled in a cloudy wreath,  
Thro' which no unpurged eyes of dullard earth,  
Unhallowed by the soul-light's inward birth,  
May peer; she sits serene, no thunder nears  
The crown of scathless laurel that she wears;  
Only High Wisdom's Light Supernal strikes  
Her upturned eyes and solemn brows and streaks  
With fleckel'd glory the enwoven mist.  
Sometimes she bends her wondering ear to list  
The tumult and the madness and the moan,  
Where man's armed heel smothers his fellow's groan  
And smiles at hearkening the ancient wail  
Float up to the deaf skies its chaunted bale,  
From the low valley where blind mortals grope,  
Unseeing the white portals bright with hope  
And broad and clear, where Wisdom sits supreme,  
That shut their dull lids on the clear sunbeam  
And look into each other's face and say,  
Is it not dark? and 'tis the full noonday!  
She openeth her solemn lips serene,  
And calleth evermore, but none come in.

O men, clay-children, old earth's later seed,  
 Let time out of your generations breed  
 Wisdom of knowledge, tho' slow born; let Truth  
 Renovate your blind age to golden youth,  
 Divine, high-thoughted; lo, ye wander far,  
 Led by the soft light of no guiding-star;  
 Ye mould fair shapes out of slow brightening dreams,  
 And gild blank shadows with some faint truth-gleams;  
 You build hopes, blossoming near youth's bright skies;  
 They fail, and straight aloud your vain voice cries  
 For help upon those fancies! Woe to thee,  
 Weak man, if groping on life's blindfold way  
 Thou cast the reins of journeying away,  
 And turn soft eyes of hope towards fantasy;  
 And put the reins into a phantom's hand;  
 And say: Now guide me to the Happy Land!  
 Lo, I am wandered from the fair truth-light,  
 Guide me to pleasant day from 'wilderling night.  
 O fool, that what he cannot do, he deems  
 A phantom can—a creature of his dreams,—  
 Begotten of the air on phantasy!

Doth the wind answer? Doth the sounding sea  
 Thunder ye back thro' showers of blinding foam,  
 'Your gods are true! their strength your spirit's home!'  
 Answers the earth, or stars of holiest light,  
 Quietly sailing thro' the quiet night?  
 Answers the great sun on his fiery flight?  
 Who bids ye kneel and pray and incense-steam  
 His bloody shrine from censers that o'ersteem?  
 Who first unlocked the floodgates of that stream  
 Of Human Life, down which we roll along?

SWINBURNE'S HYPERION

Who tells ye of the Gods ye cry on? No,  
There is no help but man's for man below;  
And he shall work and triumph and be strong  
In wisdom solely by his proper might;  
The rest is darkness, though ye call it light.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne has developed in the *Prelude* to *Songs before Sunrise* a doctrine which is strictly similar:

'For what has he whose will sees clear  
To do with doubt and faith and fear  
Swift hopes and slow despondencies? . . .  
Him can no God cast down, whom none  
Can lift in hope beyond the height  
Of Fate and Nature and things done  
By the calm rule of might and right. . . .  
Save his own soul's light overhead  
None leads him and none ever led . . .  
Save his own soul he hath no star,  
And sinks, except his own soul guide,  
Helmless in middle turn of tide.'

Of course the diction has here reached an excellence which the young poet of 1860 could not command; but the idea has not changed.

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